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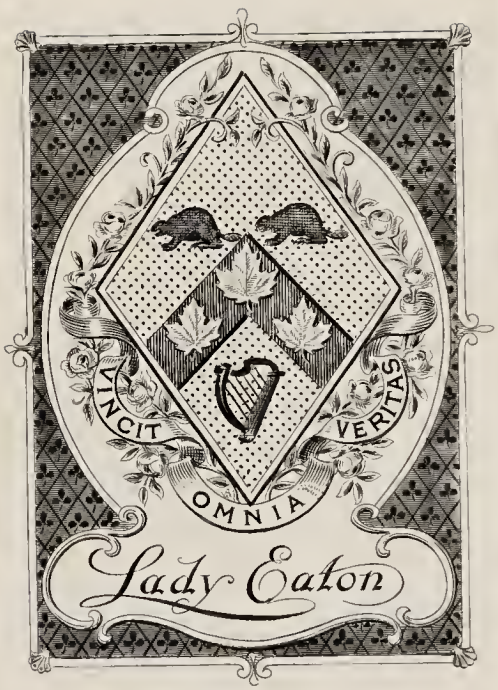

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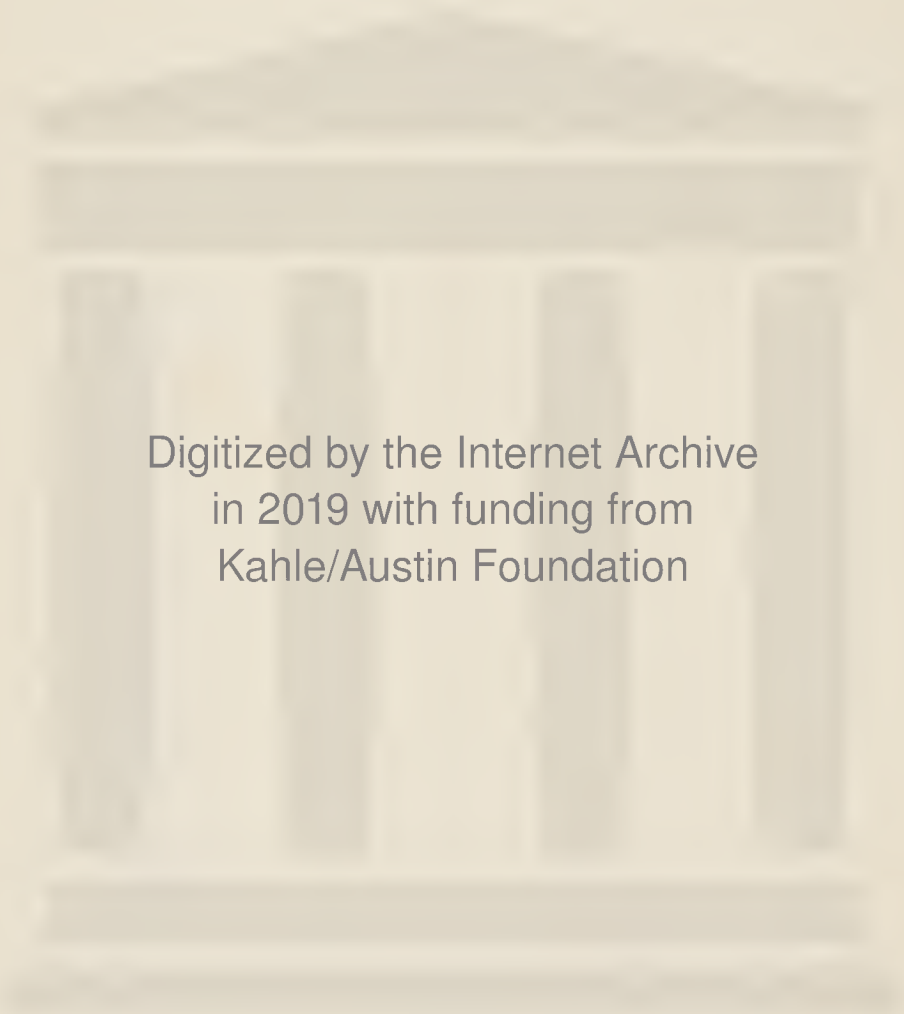

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CATHERINE DE MÉDICIS

CATHERINE DE MÉDICIS, QUEEN OF FRANCE

From a painting in the Uffizi Gallery, Florence

CATHERINE DE MÉDICIS

BY

PAUL VAN DYKE

PROFESSOR IN HISTORY AT PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

VOLUME I

LONDON

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.

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PREFACE

THERE is around the popular conception of Catherine de Médicis a sort of aura of wickedness so visible that most readers open a book about her with the unspoken question, "Was she as bad as they say?" and expect the writer will soon betray himself either as an apologete or a prosecutor. The writer of this book hopes this expectation will be disappointed. He is far from any desire to defend the character of Catherine de Médicis and equally far from any interest in attacking it. He only desires to show her as she was, and he leaves the reader to decide about the wickedness. This does not mean that he considers it the duty of a historian to be unconcerned about right and wrong or to assume that they are entirely shifting and relative. Such an attempt at artificial demoralization is never entirely successful, and, in a writer of biography, it can result only in a picture affected by a bias of which the reader has no warning. But he has tried meticulously never to let his sympathies interfere with the full and balanced presentation of fact. He wants to draw a portrait, not to pronounce a judgment.

There are few great personages of the last four hundred years so many of whose written and spoken words have survived as Catherine de Médicis; and in addition there is a very large number of opinions about her conduct or character recorded by people who knew her. It is on these that this book is based. Of the 2,686 citations offered as proofs of its narrative or its rare opinions, 1,059 are from contemporary documents printed in full in collections of documents or appendices to books, 1,013 are from my own transcripts of unprinted mss. in archives, 371 are from histories or memoirs written by contemporaries of Catherine, 137 are

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from contemporary mss. cited by modern authors, and 136 are from the text of modern authors.

I formed the purpose of writing this book fifteen years ago and it has occupied the time, not absorbed by classroom duties, of ten years since. I have been able to spend in European archives one period of twelve months, one period of six months, and four periods of six weeks. Most of this time, too little by half, was spent at the Bibliothèque Nationale and at the Archives Nationales, but I have visited for longer or shorter periods the Vatican Archives, the Archives at Florence, Modena, Mantua, Genoa, Naples, Lucerne, Basle, Berne, Zurich, Solothurn, Freibourg, and the British Museum. I regret that lack of time kept me from the Archives at Turin, and that the war cut me off from my only chance to visit Venice. A third volume appended to this work contains 484 unprinted letters of Catherine and other documents gathered during these researches. In addition I made about three thousand extracts for my own use from manuscripts, letters, and reports.

We have various reports from the French court during Catherine's life from Spanish, English, Ferrarese Ambassadors, Tuscan Agents, Papal Legates and Nuncios, and Imperial Envoys. They must be used with common sense. Spain became so hated that it was hard for the Spanish Ambassadors to get at the inside of things and they were violently prejudiced, but they give good information about the councils of the extreme orthodox party and sometimes report talks with Catherine. The English Ambassadors, though informed about Huguenot or Politique plans, were prejudiced and often misinformed about other matters. The Ferrarese Ambassadors had close connections with the family of Guise through the household of the Duchess. The most trustworthy and the least prejudiced are the Venetian Ambassadors, who wrote regularly every two weeks.

I have read practically every book of importance which bears on the life and times of Catherine de Médicis. But the publication of the admirable bibliography of Mr. Henri Hauser covering the history of France during her life has

made it superfluous to print a separate bibliography. An alphabetical list of archives and books cited is at the end of the book.

The reader may notice the absence from the list of books cited of any life of Catherine de Médicis. The reason is that no life of her based on first-hand evidence existed while this book was being written. Indeed, before the completion of the edition of her letters by the Counts Hector de la Ferrière and Baguenault de Puchesse (printed by the Ministry of Public Instruction in ten volumes, 1880 to 1909), it was hardly feasible to attempt such a life. My book was completed and in the hands of the printers before I heard of the publication of the life of Catherine de Médicis by Mr. Mariéjol. I regret that I was not able to be guided in writing it by the results of the labors of that eminent French scholar and distinguished historian.

A list of 167 review articles, all of them consulted and many of them cited, is given at the end of Volume II. I regret that lack of time abroad prevented me from examining as fully as I should have liked to do the French provincial reviews.

It is impossible to understand what Catherine de Médicis did and what she was without knowing the public events in which for thirty years she was involved, but the attempt has been made to let the reader see them as far as possible from the center of her life outward. The absence of due reference to some great social and economic changes which were going on during her lifetime arises from the fact that, so far as we can judge from what she wrote, said, and did, Catherine was so little interested in them as to be practically unaware that they were taking place. As I hope that this book will be read by people who have no scientific training in history, I have avoided hasty reference to things the reader might not understand, preferring the risk of becoming prosy by overmuch explanation to the risk of seeming dull by being obscure. The chronological method of presentation has been used in spite of a certain almost inevitable monotony that haunts it, because, although a larger

use of the topical method might produce a book more agreeable to read, it ran the risk of producing one less true.

The preceding preface was written in March 1921. Business reasons rendered desirable the postponement of the printing of the book. When it was taken in hand again this year, my engagement in the work of the American University Union in Paris compelled me to correct my proofs across the Atlantic at a distance from my books and notes and to abandon the publication of the third volume of documents; both because of the expense and for lack of leisure to verify my transcripts.

Paris, September, 1922.

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From a painting in the Uffizi Gallery, Florence

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CATHERINE DE MEDICIS

CHAPTER I

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

Caterina de' Medici was born in Florence, on the thirteenth April, 1519, in the stately house built by her great-great-great-great-grandfather Cosimo de' Medici, seventy-five years before. Cosimo was at his death the greatest man in Florence and one of the most distinguished figures in Italy. He had inherited from his ancestors, merchants in woollen goods and bankers, a large fortune and he had increased it six fold. He had also used his inherited position as leader of the democratic party which has successfully opposed the party of the aristocracy and the rich bourgeoisie, to gain political control of the city. He did not seek office, but he was able, years before his death, to direct elections and through obedient henchmen to command the policy of Florence. His wealth increased his political influence and he never scrupled to use in his business as a banker the knowledge he gained as a politician. His power was regarded as beneficent by his friends and adherents and at his death he was hailed officially as Pater Patriæ.

His son Piero, nicknamed The Gouty, survived him only five years and transmitted his wealth and power to his grandsons Giuliano and Lorenzo. The young men shared this power undisturbed for nine years and then the political enemies of the Medici in Florence joined with the family of Pope Sixtus IV, whose plans for conquest were interrupted by the foreign policy of Florence, in a conspiracy to murder them. The Pope, though he knew of the conspiracy, did not approve the murder. Giuliano was killed in church but Lorenzo escaped the murderers; the people rose in his defence and henceforth he ruled the City of Florence with a tyranny scarcely tempered by the fear of assassination.

Foreign ambassadors always consulted him, he controlled the tax list and the laws were seldom able to protect his enemies against his vengeance. He held no office and bore no title except that of *il Magnifico,* but he was regarded to all intents and purposes as Duke of Florence. His fame spread not only beyond the walls of his city but also across the Alps and at his death in 1494 he was the most distinguished statesman in Italy. In addition he had merited his fame as a writer both of prose and verse and the most discriminating patron of literature and the fine arts in the world.

Lorenzo had three sons. For his second son Giovanni he obtained a cardinal's hat, and he left his fortune and his power to his eldest son Piero. But the weakness of Piero and the disturbance caused by the French invasion of Italy in 1494 enabled the new democratic party to banish the Medici and make Florence again a republic. The Medici went to Rome, where they remained for seventeen years, during which Piero was drowned.

In 1512 Pope Julius II formed the Holy League which drove the French from Italy, and a congress of the League decided that as the Florentine Republic had shown a benevolent neutrality toward the French, it should be overthrown and the power of the Medici reëstablished. Cardinal Giovanni and his younger brother Giuliano were made masters of their native city by Spanish soldiers. The next year fortune again smiled on the Medici. Cardinal Giovanni was elected Pope and took the name of Leo X. The new Pope was not too much engrossed with the duties of his office to look after the fortunes of his family. He put Lorenzo, the twenty-one year old son of Piero, in charge of the Medici power in Florence. He also gave the red hat to Innocenzo Cybo, his sister's son and to his illegitimate cousin Giulio de' Medici. The Pope's younger brother Giuliano was made Captain General of the Church in spite of the fact that his weak health and ways of living made him unfit for war. But as fate would have it, the office proved no sine-

cure. Francis I ascended the throne of France in January, 1515, at once renewed French claims to the Duchy of Milan, crossed the Alps at the head of 35,000 men and 150 guns, perhaps the finest army any King of France had ever led, and beat the hitherto unbeaten Swiss mercenaries at Marignano; a fight so fierce that one of his marshals said none of the other eighteen pitched battles of his life had been more than child's play beside it.

The forces which the Pope and his vassals had been able to put in the field had been commanded, not by the titular Captain General of the Church, but by the young Lorenzo, and Leo profited by the alliance he was forced to make with the French King to push Lorenzo's fortune. He conquered for him the Duchy of Urbino, at an expense so great that it began the bankruptcy of the papal treasury which two years later gave one of the occasions for the schism of Teutonic Christendom from the Universal Church. There were indeed grounds for the sentence which condemned the Duke of Urbino to lose his Duchy as an unfaithful vassal. He had been secretly allied with the French and had refused to march at the command of his overlord. Nevertheless, the chief cause of Leo's war against Urbino was not the offenses of the Duke but the ambition of his sister-in-law who wanted to see a ducal coronet on her son's head. The transaction has about it something "very hateful and disgusting." It makes the impression (on a modern Roman Catholic historian as on contemporary chroniclers) that the Pope's action "was less concerned with giving free course to justice than with providing a state for his nephew to rule." [1]

After conquering a Duchy for his nephew, Leo sent him to France to win an heiress, Madeleine de la Tour d'Auvergne, and she became the mother of Caterina de' Medici.

To Caterina's father therefore the election of his uncle as Pope brought a duchy, a rich bride and the control of Florence. He received because he was the secular head of

[1] Pastor, IV, 103.

the family of Medici other advantages which were the inherited returns for the patient and intelligent patronage given to literature and the fine arts by the members of his house from Cosimo to Leo. Lorenzo di Piero de' Medici did not in his brief life accomplish the smallest thing worthy of commemoration, but few men have had a more striking monument than either of the two dedicated to him. Michel Angelo made him immortal as the figure of Thought in the Medicean Chapel. Machiavelli dedicated to him the Prince and in the last chapter called upon him to be a "new Moses to redeem Italy from the barbarians and prove that the ancient valour is not yet dead in Italian hearts."

Caterina de' Medici was therefore at her birth a favorite of fortune. True this distinguished inheritance brought to the child some disadvantages. The name of Medici was known throughout the world but, north of the Alps; a family whose wealth came from trade and banking, rather than from inherited feudal estates, whose ancestors had not been warriors, but merchants who had gained power only by ecclesiastical influence and municipal politics, would be looked on askance as somewhat second rate, not at all equal to the collateral branches of a royal house: not even on a par with the great or the ancient families of the feudal nobility. Nevertheless this heiress of the "Eredità di Cosimo de' Medici il Magnifico," this "little Duchess" of Urbino, this "nipota" of Leo X, was too valuable a pawn in the game of international politics to fail of many distinguished suitors for her hand. The child was born to great expectations, but the most sagacious political prophet could not have foreseen that she would become queen and regent of one of the greatest nations of the world; the mother of three kings, two queens, a sovereign duke, and a reigning duchess.[1]

At Caterina's birth her father was so ill that he had scarcely left his bed for five months. The baby was immediately carried to him and, in spite of some disappointment

[1] Rel., II, 3, pp. 139, 312.

that his first born was not a boy, he showed great pleasure. Three days later she was baptized under the name of Caterina, Maria, Romola. In her later life she used only the first of these names perhaps because it had been borne by her mother. Twelve days after the ceremony the mother died of puerperal fever. In a letter which was dictated to the Ambassador of France asking him to tell the King this news Lorenzo wrote "I am in bed with a little fever, catarrh and many other bad symptoms and for my evil fortune there has come upon me in addition this sad blow to lose my most beloved wife." Six days later he died. So far as we can judge from the record of his symptoms which has survived in the letters of his secretary, the cause of his death was galloping consumption to whose contagion he was probably rendered more susceptible by the licentious life which he had led in common with most young Italian princes of his day.[1]

The tendency to short life noticeable among the males of the House of Medici since the days of Cosimo had thus brought it to the verge of extinction. Ariosto struck by this spectacle of a cradle between two coffins represents the City of Florence as saying "Only a branch shows a little green in its leaves and I am divided between fear and hope whether the winter will leave it to me or kill it." The fears of the poet were nearly realized a few months later, for the orphan became so critically ill that her great uncle received word in Rome that she could not live. The grandmother carried the infant to Rome when she was well enough to travel and soon after her arrival the Pope told the Venetian Ambassador that this "child of sorrow" as he called her "with tears in his eyes," was "a pretty, plump, little thing." The child remained in Rome for nearly six years but we know nothing of her life there except that her great uncle Leo X, before she was two years old, thought seriously of marrying her in the future to her illegitimate cousin Hippolito who was then seven.[2]

[1] Corsini refutes older stories. [2] Baschet, von Reumont, pntd. 263, 264.

In her seventh year, when her grandfather's cousin Clement VII had succeeded her uncle Leo X as Pope, Caterina was taken back to Florence. Writing about this time to the senate, the Venetian Ambassador says, "I will not remind your magnificences of the genealogy of the family of the Medici . . . but I will point out the fact that the said family is extinct in the legitimate male line because today there are only natural sons, i. e., Pope Clement, natural son of Giuliano (the murdered brother of Lorenzo); Cardinal Hippolito, natural son of Giuliano (younger son of Lorenzo); and Alessandro (illegitimate half brother of Catherine). There are indeed two legitimate women, Lucrezia, sister of Leo X, now wife of Jacopo Salviati, and the little Duchess Caterina." [1]

In thus suggesting the danger that the name of Medici might disappear because the family consisted of women and three bastards, two of whom were priests, the writer entirely forgot the existence of the little Cosimo, who was in the end to restore the fortunes of the family name at Florence and become the founder of the line of Medici grand-dukes of Tuscany. Cosimo was the son of Giovanni delle Bande Nere, a descendant in the third generation of a younger brother of old Cosimo. Giovanni was, when he was killed by a cannon ball in his 27th year, the only Medici who had ever won distinction in arms and the most famous Italian soldier of his day. Aretino, who witnessed his death and wrote a celebrated letter to describe it, regarded him as the possible political Messias, the longed for "Prince" of Machiavelli who was to banish and liberate his countrymen and "make of Italy now a slave—a queen." It was natural enough that the Venetian Ambassador should overlook the existence of little Cosimo, the son of this hero, for the manager of the Medici affairs, Clement VII, persisted in doing so: perhaps because, being himself in illegitimate descent from the older line, he was afraid of seeming to suggest in

[1] Rel. II, 5, p. 410.

any way that a legitimate descendant of a cadet had any place at all in the family.[1]

At all events, whatever his motive was, Clement VII did concentrate his attentions on the little girl and the two illegitimate little boys. Caterina lived in Florence under the care of her father's sister, the wife of Filippo Strozzi, one of the wealthiest of the Florentine nobles. Caterina always kept a very grateful memory of her aunt, though she lost her when she was still a small child, and showed that gratitude in her later years by the favor she granted to her cousins the Strozzi when they fled to France as refugees. Hippolito, now fourteen, had been sent to Florence some months before Caterina and he was in training to succeed her father as Magnifico, the title given by the Medici themselves to that one of their family who as head of the house exercised their hereditary power in Florence. Caterina's illegitimate half-brother, Alessandro, a few years older than herself, had gone with her to Florence and probably at first all three lived together in the Medici palace. But about a year later we know that Caterina was living in a villa near the city, and her great protector had renewed in his own mind the project of Leo X to marry her to Hippolito. Caterina was heiress to half the fortune of the Medici. Leo X had left the other half to Clement VII, who now thought of giving it to Hippolito and thus re-establishing the name, wealth and power of the Medici in Florence.[2]

But in this plan he reckoned without the people of Florence. They resented the fact that a child had been sent to them as untitled ruler of their city. In addition the boy and his mentor, the Cardinal of Cortona, had not the tact to cloak their dominion. When the councils of the city met to choose magistrates the Cardinal of Cortona used to send the list of candidates to Rome, where Clement VII struck off the names he did not like and the election was

[1] See Pastor, VII, Bk. 1.
[2] Arch. Flor. Strozziane X, f. 31, 66; Rel. II, 3, p. 129.

made out of the rest. Hippolito also lacked that distinguished courtesy for which his ancestors had once been famous. He insisted upon preceding every one, claimed the most obsequious sort of greetings and, in general, took upon himself the airs of a lord and ruler. The Florentines were a very proud and keen-witted people; even those who were content with the loss of liberty clung very hard to the last shows of it and they deeply resented the boy's incapacity, his tactlessness and his bad manners. [1]

In April, 1527, a sudden rising took place against the House of Medici. A crowd gathered in the streets crying "The People, The People, Liberty, Liberty." They soon increased to six hundred armed men, including many of the leading citizens of Florence. They seized the palace of the government, threatened to attack the Medici palace and met with such success that the Ambassador of Venice felt that the power of the Medici was almost finished. But the Cardinal of Cortona was finally able by the use of his troops to overawe the revolters, and, on condition of a free pardon to all concerned, the demonstration was quieted.[2]

A month later the policy of Clement VII, who had been trying to keep a middle position between France and Spain, brought upon Rome one of the most terrible disasters of history. The Spanish army stormed the walls of the city and began a sack whose horrors sent a thrill of disgust through the entire world. Clement VII took refuge in the Castle of Saint Angelo from whose impregnable walls he watched the agony of the holy city. As soon as this news reached Florence the revolution broke out again and from the very first the Cardinal of Cortona seems to have recognized that he would not be able to resist it. He began to send out of the city by night, the most precious possessions of the family, and he finally concluded an agreement with the representatives of the new government that the Medici would surrender to the people the government

[1] Rel. II (1), pp. 73, 74; II, 3, p. 130.
[2] Rel. II, 3, p. 52.

of Florence, on condition that no financial accounting should be asked of them and that they could remain in the city as private citizens with all their privileges confirmed. In spite of this agreement and only the day after it was made, the Cardinal of Cortona and Hippolito were so strongly advised by their friends to leave the city that they went to Lucca.[1]

A few months later Niccolò Capponi, the chief magistrate of Florence, proposed in full council that Jesus Christ should be elected perpetual King of the Florentine people. The motion was carried all but unanimously and the government coined ducats which had on one side the lily of Florence and on the other the cross surmounted by a crown of thorns and surrounded with the motto "Jesus Rex Noster et Deus Noster."

The new government thought it better to hold the little Caterina as a hostage. Accordingly they sent Bernardo Rinuccini, a very distinguished citizen, with a band of soldiers to bring the child into the city from the nearby villa of Poggia Cajano, where she had been taken for refuge. By the orders of the government he confided her to the care of the Dominican nuns at the convent of Santa Lucia. The child's aunt resented this seizure of her niece, went to the convent, took her away from the nuns and brought her to the Medici palace. But apparently fearing that the palace might be attacked in some riot, she soon carried her back again to the keeping of the nuns. A few months later, by orders of the government she was transferred to the convent of Santa Caterina of Siena. That convent being in some danger of infection from the plague, the Ambassador of France induced the government to transfer the young daughter of Madeleine de la Tour d'Auvergne to the convent of the Santissima Annunziata delle Murate. Five months later, May 1528, her aunt died and the little girl was left alone in a city filled with the enemies of her house. The nuns must have been very kind to the friendless

[1] Rel. II, 1, p. 56.

child, because in this instance also, Catherine retained grateful memories of her childhood's friends. Later in life she bestowed a great many favors upon the convent of the Murate and in the private diary of one of the sisters, of which a fragment has survived, it is recorded that the nuns were fond of the little duchess because of her friendly and gracious manners.[1]

A diligent search among the papers of these convents preserved in the archives at Florence, reveals no traces of the life of Caterina in them. That she was kept in gentle confinement as a prisoner, or rather as a hostage, under the kindly guardianship of the nuns, we know from other sources. The Venetian Ambassador, writing home on the 17th of September 1529, records "the council has been discussing the message brought from Rome by a gentleman of Monsignor de Tarbes to the effect that the Pope has no quarrel with them and does not want anything except that they should be obedient to the church and restore to His Holiness the property which belongs to him, replace his arms and surrender to him the little duchess, the daughter of the late Senor Lorenzo, who is under guard in a monastery of this city. But at the suggestion of this gentleman the government has decided to send two ambassadors to the Pope to discuss these matters with him." [2]

This negotiation came to nothing and it is doubtful whether Clement VII expected that it would come to anything except to gain time and, perhaps, to recover from the hands of his enemies, the little duchess. At the end of June, he had made a treaty with the Emperor Charles V by which it was agreed that the Emperor's illegitimate daughter Margaret, married to the illegitimate half brother of Caterina, should receive as a marriage portion the City of Florence. Part of the same imperial army which two years before had stormed and sacked the City of Rome, now invested Florence. The inhabitants defended them-

[1] Baschet, von Reumont, ctd. 126.
[2] Rel. II, 1, p. 217.

selves with great courage for a year and then, forced by hunger which in the end brought about the sale in the open market of rats and cats at high prices, they opened their gates.

During this time of heroic endurance the old partisans of the Medici were naturally regarded in Florence with the greatest suspicion; large numbers of them were arrested and thrown into prison, and one of them who was accused of having acted as a spy for the besiegers, was hanged one morning from the balcony of the governmental palace. In this suspicion and hatred of all friends or adherents of the House of Medici, the little Caterina became involved. Many of the nuns of the convent in which she was held as a hostage, were secretly adherents of the Medici. They were in the habit of sending baskets containing food to those in prison and it was discovered that on the bottom of these baskets there was formed, either in the baskets themselves or by means of flowers, the representation of the Medici arms which had been erased from all public buildings in the city. This discovery came like oil upon flame and the matter was at once reported with much excitement to the governing committee of the city. Already some of the more extreme opponents of the Medici had made the most terrible suggestions in regard to what ought to be done with little Caterina. One proposal was to expose her to associations which would infallibly corrupt her morals, with the hope of so ruining her reputation that the Pope could never marry her to anyone who might attempt to conquer the city in her interest. This new incident brought up another suggestion, that she and other relatives and chief adherents of the Medici should be tied to the walls in places exposed to the cannon of the besiegers. But such terrific outbursts of that intense partisan hatred which in the past had brought upon Italy all her worst political misfortunes, were not even considered by the council. The only step they took was to send a distinguished citizen,

Salvestro Aldobrandini, to transfer Caterina from the Convent of the Murate back to the Convent of Santa Lucia.[1]

He found the little girl dressed as a nun, with her hair cut short like the sisters, and she flatly refused to go with him, saying she intended to be a nun and remain her whole life with these beloved mothers with whom she was now staying. It was in vain that Salvestro urged upon her that she would find equally kind friends in Santa Lucia, which had been founded by her family. The child stood firm in her refusal to go and the sisters of the convent fell upon their knees and with tears called upon Heaven to help them keep their charge. Salvestro Aldobrandini was unable to produce any effect upon the excited women and went back to the council to report his ill success. Two days later he came back again and told the nuns that Caterina must go with him. She wept wildly at first, but, on Salvestro's assurance that she could come back again in a month, she consented to be put upon a mule and followed by her maids was taken to Santa Lucia, whence, shortly after the surrender of the city, she was by orders of Clement VII conveyed to Rome. A correspondent of her half-brother Alessandro wrote to him from Rome October 13th, 1530, "The Signora Duchessa arrived here last evening. She has not yet been able to come to the palace but is lodged in your house: she is beautiful, discreet and wise beyond her years." [2]

On the fifth of July, 1531, Alessandro entered Florence and took possession of the city. He had recently been created by the King of Spain Duke of Città di Penna, a duchy which consisted chiefly of title, and he did what his forefathers had never done, took the title of Duke of Florence.

This preferment of Alessandro to be the visible ruler of Florence was very much resented by Hippolito, who was not consoled by the fact that he had been made, a year

[1] Rel. II, 1, pp. 233, 274, 304, 315.
[2] Von Reumont, Note 43, Principi II, 203.

before, a cardinal and endowed with very rich benefices. Though he took and spent with great freedom the money which came to him from his ecclesiastical position, he seldom wore the robes of a prince of the church, but preferred to dress, as he has been painted by Titian, in the splendid costume of a nobleman.

The little Caterina was confided to the care of her aunt, the sister of Leo X, Lucretia Salviati, whose husband, a Florentine nobleman, was one of the Pope's right-hand men and very influential in his councils. Of Caterina's life at Rome very few notices have been found, nor is it probable that, to those outside of the intimate family circle, she appeared a very conspicuous personage, for when she arrived there she was not yet twelve years old. She left Rome to return to Florence in the end of April, 1532, and we have but one account of what she did during the eighteen months when she was growing into the early womanhood of an Italian princess. In the reports which the returned Venetian Ambassador Soriano gave about the family of the Pope, he said:

"The little Duchess is of a rather vivacious nature but shows an amiable disposition. She was educated by the nuns of the Convent of the Murate in Florence, ladies of holy life and the most excellent reputation and she has very good manners. She is small and thin, her face is not refined and she has the big eyes which belong to the family of the Medici. The Duke Alessandro (her half-brother) shows that he has a good mind and he has the tact to accommodate himself better to the nature and will of the Pope than the Cardinal de' Medici. Therefore His Holiness has made it evident to me that he loves the Duke more than he does the Cardinal and expects very much more from him. Many times in conversation with me, he has told me that he intends to make the Duke the head of the family of the Medici and to let him govern Florence as his ancestors have done. The Most Reverend Cardinal de' Medici (Hippolito) was twenty years old on the 23rd of March, 1531. He has a good mind and has given some little time to study so that he cannot be considered, in comparison with the other Cardinals, as ignorant. He is indeed of a vivacious, one might almost say restless, nature, but perhaps

it comes from his youth. Up to now he shows a very great reluctance to being a priest and the Pope said to me with his own mouth that when the Cardinal returned from Florence he was very unwilling to take holy orders. Indeed at that time the Pope used to me these very words, 'He is crazy, the devil, he is crazy, he doesn't want to be a priest.' Since then it has developed that he is very envious of Duke Alexander, because it seems to him that the Pope did him a great injustice in putting the Duke at the head of the government of Florence. He thought this position belonged to him because he was older and because he does not believe that he is a bastard as the Duke is. But even without that consideration (that is, even if both were born illegitimate) he thinks himself of a better social class than the Duke, whose mother was a servant. In addition his father Giuliano was Duke before Lorenzino, the father of Alessandro. He also thinks that he is more beloved in Florence, because his father was popular in the city and Alessandro's father was very much hated. This quarrel between the two nepoti gives great displeasure to the Pope, who is disgusted with the Cardinal for disturbing his plans. I have also heard it whispered by some that the Cardinal de' Medici wants to put off his priestly robes and to take as his wife the little Duchess, his third cousin, with whom he lives on the best possible terms and is also very much loved by her. Indeed there is no other in whom she confides so much or whose counsel she is so apt to seek about her wishes and desires, as the said Cardinal. The Cardinal is also very discontented with the Pope because he has not immediately paid his debts and will not give him the large allowance he desires. All three of these young people unite in a common hatred of their uncle by marriage, Jacopo Salviati. This hate is so vehement that there is danger that some day he may lose his life, and this last carnival the said Cardinal came very near killing him with his own hand. The cause of his hate is that the Cardinal and the others think that Salviati controls the Pope in all things and persuades him to keep a tight hand on the purse strings and not to give them money according to their appetite for spending and squandering." [1]

[1] Rel. II, 3, p. 280.

CHAPTER II

MARRIAGE

Although the little Duchess lived a retired life whose secrets were known only to those who had the chance of hearing the gossip of the most intimate circles of the Vatican, she was by force of circumstances a sort of international figure and the threads of diplomacy were already connecting her with the affairs of the great world. If her cousin Hippolito ever really wanted to put off his cardinal's robes and marry her, and if her affection ever turned towards him, as the Venetian Ambassador said, she never had a chance of following the dictates of her heart. She already had had many suitors for her hand, who cared nothing for her homely little person and very much for her dowry and the political advantages which might come from marrying her.

The politics of Italy and indeed the politics of the entire world, depended upon the rivalry between the Emperor Charles V (who was also the King of Spain) and Francis I, King of France. In this conflict between the Hapsburgs and the Valois, Clement VII tried to hold a middle position and to sell his alliance to the highest bidder. He began his pontificate with a feeling of great dissatisfaction with the King of France because in the conclave the cardinals who acted in the French interest had very much opposed his election and, in addition, the French had sympathized with the republican party which drove the Medici from Florence. If he seemed later to enter into a close alliance with the French, it was, as the Venetian Ambassador Foscari wrote in May, 1526, not because he liked them, but for his own gain and for the gain of Italy. That alliance had brought upon him the terrible disaster of the storming of

Rome by the imperial army, and the consequent loss of the family dominion in Florence. Then, as we have seen, Clement turned and made terms with his conqueror and again it was the Spanish arms which restored the Medici to Florence.

But Clement was a man who always wanted two strings to his bow, and the following undated letter belongs to this time:

"Holy Father:

"I have received by the Abbott of Negres, the bearer of this, the letter which it has pleased your Holiness to write to me with your own hand . . . concerning the marriage of my son the Duke of Orleans and of my cousin [1] the Duchess of Urbino your niece, as also of the good feeling between us which has been and is a very singular pleasure and contentment to me. Thanking you with a very good heart, Most Holy Father, for the good and honest proposals which they have laid before me on your part, by which I have recognized and recognize more and more the love and affection which your said Holiness has for me, which you can believe is no less on our side than it is on yours . . . and inasmuch, Most Holy Father, as upon all this I have declared to the bearer . . . my final and last resolution . . . it seems to me that there is no need of writing to you a longer letter. Leaving what remains to be said to him and praying God to give to your Holiness as good and long a life as I desire for you,

"Your humble and devoted son,

"Francis." [2]

As he had arranged a Spanish marriage for Alessandro, Clement was now inclined to look in the direction of France for the marriage of Caterina to the second son of Francis I. This plan was very much opposed by Jacopo Salviati and much more by his wife Lucretia, who became even violent in arguing against it, perhaps, as the Venetian Ambassador suggests, because her husband was inclined to the imperial side, or perhaps because she felt that the blood of the Medici was not really equal to that of the legitimate son of a king.

[1] The King addressed a young noble as "cousin"; an older one often as "uncle."

[2] Arch. Vat. Principi A. I, 7, p. 12.

If she had this feeling, she imitated the founder of the house, Cosimo, who was never willing to "make a marriage alliance for his children with the great ones of the earth, although he had offers of that kind from the King of Naples." [1]

The idea of this French match had been suggested to Clement within four months after he had ascended the pontifical throne, at a time when Caterina was only six years old. Francis I, who aspired to be, and indeed seemed to be, the dominant figure in Italy, had then offered Clement VII to make Hippolito King of Naples and to marry Caterina to his second son, the Duke of Orleans, and make him Duke of Milan. Since that time the child's hand had been sought by a very large number of suitors, the Prince of Ferrara, the King of Scotland, James V, the Duke of Vaudemont (a brother of the Duke of Lorraine), the Duke of Richmond (the natural son of Henry VIII of England), the Duke of Mantua, the heir apparent of the restored Duke of Urbino and the Duke of Milan.[2]

The French marriage had been pushed by Caterina's uncle, the Duke of Albany. He came to Rome in November, 1530, bringing with him costly gifts for Caterina, "jewels, a bracelet and other articles of adornment to the value of 10,000 ducats and besides he gave her three most beautiful Achinese with the very richest sort of equipment fine enough for any great queen who lived." At this time she was described in a letter of the ambassador of the Duke of Milan as follows: "I have seen her twice on horseback, but not sufficiently well to give a complete judgment about her. She seems to me rather large for her age, fairly good looking without the help of any cosmetic, a blonde with a rather stout face. But she appears very young and I do not believe that she can be called or considered a woman for a year and a half longer. It is said that she has good feelings and a very acute and adroit mind for her age. She

[1] Rel. II, 3, p. 303.
[2] Arch. M. ctd. Baschet, von Reumont.

lives in the house of Duke Alessandro. When she rides abroad she is escorted by the pages of the Duke with his war horses and by other gentlemen and also by the Bishop of Forli, Major-Domo of the Cardinal de' Medici, who accompanies her now that the Bishop Tornaboni, who conducted her from Florence and is so far as I hear really in charge of her, happens to be unwell. Three Florentine matrons of mature age also ride out with her." [1]

The dowry demanded of the Pope by the Duke of Albany in the name of the King of France was exorbitant. What was actually put into the marriage contract was quite moderate, 130,000 écus. In return for this, Caterina renounced her rights upon her paternal inheritance. The King agreed to give his son 80,000 écus of his maternal inheritance and the Duchy of Orleans with a guaranteed income of 50,000 livres a year. Ten thousand of this and the palace of Gien near the river Loire completely and properly furnished, was to be settled on the bride. But, although the dowry was moderate, certain secret articles appended to the contract promised all the King could ask. The Pope is to give "The cities of Pisa, Livorno, Reggio and Modena to his said niece and consequently to her future husband." To this Parma is to be added. The Pope promises also to help Francis recover the Duchy of Milan and the Lordship of Genoa. And in addition he promises whenever the Duchess wishes to recover Urbino "to give aid to her future husband." This contract was made in 1531, but it was understood that the marriage was to be delayed. It was the sort of marriage engagement among princes which was very easily broken, but the interests of both Francis and Clement kept this firm. None of the secret articles of the contract were ever fulfilled. How the Pope reconciled their existence with the article of his agreement with Charles V made at Bologna two years later, that in case of any agreement about a marriage between his niece Caterina and a son of the King of France, he would use his good

[1] Baschet, von Reumont, App. 282, 283.

offices to see that the King of France would keep the general peace without "stirring up intrigues to disturb Italy," it is hard to understand.[1]

It was finally arranged that the marriage should take place at Nice. Meantime Caterina was sent back to Florence and the Pope told the English Ambassador he was sending her "to avoid the summer heat of Rome." [2]

In Florence Caterina lived under the care of her aunt Maria Salviati de' Medici, widow of Giovanni delle Bande Nere, and the following letter shows some of the difficulties the Pope met in making arrangements for the journey of his niece to France. It is from Jacopo Salviati to his daughter Maria:

"I have two letters in answer to my single letter about your journey with the Duchess which do not please me at all, nor does it seem to me that they contain that good sense which I had persuaded myself you possessed. Because it does not seem to me, when you have been asked by His Holiness to go, that it's any of your part to lay down conditions under which you will be willing to go and the money which you think he ought to spend. It seems to me that it's your duty to go anyhow as well furnished as you can, although in fact you don't lack anything, and let him think about what he wants to give you, remembering that the more simply you go, so much the more you will be esteemed by everyone, because that is what's fitting to the station in life in which you find yourself. . . . I am astonished that, since the entire fortune of Cosimo (her son) depends upon his Holiness, you don't know for yourself what you ought to do. Apply yourself in the best way you can to doing what you're asked to do . . . because that's the best thing for the interests of Cosimo.

"And you would do well to act in such a way that I don't have to write so many times and still don't get what I want done, because words are not enough and I cannot be satisfied with them.

"Nec plura. Vale, Roma 2 Augustii 1533.

"Jacopus Salviati." [3]

Early in the month of August, 1533, the work of preparing the trousseau was going actively forward and the

[1] Letts. X, 478, Granvelle (1).
[2] Cal. Ven. 29 App. 1532.
[3] Arch. Florence, 5922, p. 189.

Duchess of Camerino wrote to the Marchioness of Mantua that she has arrived in Florence in order to accompany Caterina to France by the order of the Pope. She finds her "entirely unfurnished in all things that are necessary . . . and because there are no artisans here who know how to do embroidery of the right sort, we are forced to send to your part of the country two dresses and two petticoats to have them embroidered. I have become willing to be guilty of the rude presumption of addressing this package to your Excellency because I know that you are so courteous and polite that you will pardon me and so I send the said dresses and petticoats begging you to do me the kindness to cause them to be given to some good master who will embroider them according to the accompanying pattern, and I send also three pounds of gold, two pounds of silver and two pounds of silk. If by any chance these are not enough for such work, I beg your Excellency to have the goodness to let me know and I will send more. If by any chance there is also in Mantua some good piece of work of black silk or of crimson and gold, I beg that your Excellency will do me the kindness to cause it to be given to the bearer of this letter, who has money to pay for everything. These are to be used for bedcoverings and curtains. And I hope your Excellency will be so courteous as to forgive me for being so presumptuous, because, as I have said, your great courtesy and the obligation under which I am to your Excellency are the reasons for it and so most reverently I kiss your hand." [1]

The first of September, 1533, Caterina left Florence accompanied by Maria Salviati de' Medici and Caterina Cybo, Duchess of Camerino, and escorted by a number of her relatives among the Florentine nobility. She traveled by way of Pistoia to Spezia, where she spent a day in the best palazzo of the town belonging to the Biassi. Her uncle, the Duke of Albany, was waiting for her with a fleet of twenty-seven ships. She embarked on the royal galley,

[1] Baschet, von Reumont, pntd. 293.

a magnificent boat constructed at enormous expense. The state salon extended from the mainmast to the rudder, covered with the richest crimson damask strewn with golden lilies trailing down profusely in long folds almost to the sea. Around the stern were sculptures in high relief, gold on a black ground, on the gilded "freccia" a lantern of polished metal shone. The awnings were of purple embroidered: the rooms hung with silk and cloth of gold. The rowing benches were chained to the sides with silver chains and the crew of three hundred rowers were dressed in damascened satin in the royal colors of red and yellow.[1]

The fleet carried her to Nice, where, early the next month, she was joined by Pope Clement VII with a small but gorgeous train of thirteen Cardinals, whose pages were dressed in coats of green velvet made in the Turkish fashion and carried bows.[2] He brought with him a large stock of costly presents for various people at the French Court. The marriage ceremonies were completed at Marseille on the twenty-eighth of October, 1533, and at the age of fourteen years and six months Caterina de' Medici became the wife of the Duke of Orleans.

The nuptial benediction had been the culmination of a splendid series of festivals and feasts which lasted for thirty-four days. At the crowning ceremony Caterina wore a dress of brocade with a cloak of dark blue velvet lined with ermine in ducal fashion. On her head she wore a crown and coif "worth a kingdom." The Queen was so richly dressed that it was impossible "to tell the colour of her robe for the jewels which covered it." Catherine probably wore some of the jewelry sent as part of her dot by Clement VII. It included a belt of gold with eight great balas rubies and a diamond in the middle, a pendant set with a great diamond, ruby and emerald, a string of eighty pearls, a big diamond set in a ring, a valuable emerald ring and a ruby ring, a rose

[1] Mazzini, 11, 10.
[2] Baschet, von Reumont, 295.

of twenty diamonds and other jewelry; the whole of the value of twenty-seven thousand gold scudi.[1]

The young husband was thirteen days older than the bride, of a melancholy disposition, but considered very wise for his age. The match was exceedingly unpopular, because people thought that this daughter of rich bankers whose relatives had become Popes was not a match for the son of a prince and the general impression was that Francis had been cheated in the matter of her dowry, which the courtiers did not think large enough for the heiress of the great Medici fortune. Catherine had to the full that exaggerated morbid pride which was so characteristic of all the men and women of the Italian Renascence. The sometimes badly concealed contempt of the great lords and ladies of the court who looked down upon her as a merchant's daughter married for her money, whose fortune had not turned out as large as it was expected to be, must have been very hard to bear for the young girl who had always been a person of the greatest importance in any circle where she had previously lived. But the personal tact which seems to have been her strongest native quality stood her now in good stead. The Venetian Ambassador writes of her, "although most unpopular, she shows herself exceedingly submissive and the King, her husband, the Dauphin (her husband's older brother) and the other royal brothers show signs of being very fond of her." [2]

The girl bride and her boy husband were really not of enough importance to be often mentioned in correspondence from the court. And therefore, for any knowledge of what Catherine was at this time in her life, we are thrown back entirely upon her own correspondence. Unfortunately very few of her letters of these years have survived. Mr. de la Ferrière has printed five written before her seventeenth year, when the sudden death of the Dauphin made her husband heir to the throne and Catherine the prospective

[1] Baschet, von Reumont, pntd. App. 321.
[2] Rel. I, 1, p. 191.

queen of France. Four more letters of this early period previously unprinted are printed in this work. Of these nine letters only the two which follow are written in her own hand. Two sent before her marriage to the Duchess of Savoy and the King of France are dictated notes of ceremony. Of the three addressed to her uncle, the Duke of Albany, two are formal letters of information and inquiry, the real message in each case being confided, as was so often done in those days, to the bearer of the letter. There is a touch in the third letter to her uncle which suggests that this young girl, who had been treated as a pawn on the political chessboard ever since her birth, had not been deprived by that atmosphere of all natural gayety. She tells her uncle that she has heard that one of the captains of the ships he brought with him has a tambourinist who plays very well the French dances and she begs him to do her the great pleasure of sending this musician in order that she may have him with her.[1]

The two letters written with her own hand are interesting as showing that, at the time of her marriage, Catherine was a badly educated young girl who had very little to say and did not know very well how to say it. Within a few months of her marriage, she wrote to her aunt Maria Salviati de' Medici:

"My Cousin:

"This letter is only to send you some news of myself and to tell you again that it's a long while since I have had any news of you, which makes me wonder because I have written you letter after letter and have never had a reply, which causes me to wonder.

"I beg you that the things which were left to be done when I came away, that if they are finished you will be good enough to send them to me by some trusted person and to send me a list of what they cost and also the price of the other things which you sent to me a little while ago because I have lost the other bill which you sent to me and also I beg you that if the collars which I was having made at Mantua that if they are done that

[1] Letts. I, p. 1.

you will send them to me together with the other things. Also that you will have made for me a pair of large sleeves full of embroidery and that they shall be embroidered in black silk and gold and send me word with the bill for the other things how much they will cost. No more at present. I recommend myself to you. From Solcile the seventh of October." [On the back of the sheet is written:] "I have forgotten to tell you that I beg that you will send me all these as soon as it's possible for you to do it and again I recommend myself to you.

"Your good cousin,
"CATERINE." [1]

A second letter of the young bride was addressed to Clement VII:

"MOST HOLY FATHER:

"This letter is only to let your Holiness know that I am well and in good spirits and very well satisfied and I beg that you will keep me in memory as you always have done and some time do me the favor to have someone write to me because I do not desire anything else except to hear that your Holiness is well. No more now to your Holiness. I humbly recommend myself and my Lord of Orleans [her husband] recommends himself humbly to your Holiness and humbly we kiss your feet. From Paris on the 22nd day of February, 1534. Your Holiness' most devoted daughter,

"CATERINE." [2]

Another letter of this period was written to her illegitimate half-brother, Duke Alessandro of Florence; the only one written to him which has survived. It was a formal note dictated to a secretary and the real message was confided to the courier Messire Hubaldine. This is signed "Your good sister, Caterine." [3]

Another letter to Clement which Catherine dictated to a secretary four months after her marriage seems to be a little illuminative of her character and conduct:

[1] Arch. Florence, Med. 5922, p. 197.
[2] Arch. Vat. Principi I, 8, p. 227.
[3] Arch. Florence, Med. 4726, p. 11.

"Very Holy Father: Very warmly and as humbly as I can I recommend myself to your Holiness.

"Monseigneur the King is about to write to you in favor of Master François Vohue, Abbe of Cernay, Dean of Tours, Grand Provost of Normandy in the Church of Chartres, in the hope that the good pleasure of your Holiness may be to consent that he should remain and be perpetual and irrevocable coadjutor, both in temporal and spiritual affairs, of the bishopric of Saint Malo, whose Bishop, uncle of the said Vohue, has asked this from my said lord the King, who has granted it to him as you will hear more amply by his said letter. This Vohue has a brother General of Finance and both of them are cousins-german of my cousin Monsieur the Legate, and they are great supporters and friends of Monsieur the Grand Master. Both of them are personages from whom Monseigneur [her husband] and I, not only now but in the future, can expect very great services not only from them but also by the favor of their supporters and friends, of whom they have an infinite number in this kingdom. For this reason, Very Holy Father, I very humbly beg your Holiness that for my sake you will treat the said Vohue so graciously in the matter of the necessary papers to be sent, that he and his aforesaid brother and relatives, who have begged me to intervene in this affair, may be able to recognize by the results that our present letters have been very valuable to them, which will do me a great favor and put me under more and more obligation to your Holiness.

"Very Holy Father, I pray the Creator that it may be His will to keep you a long while in health and prosperity for the good guidance and government of our Holy Mother Church. Written at Paris the 23rd day of February, 1533.

"Your most humble servant,

"Caterine." [1]

This letter shows that the young bride threw herself with the utmost energy, from the very beginning, into the intrigues of the French Court. The tendency on the part of powerful personalities to build up a faction by the use of influence in the distribution of patronage had long been dominant there. The zest in the accumulation and the use of political power which afterwards became her dominant passion, Catherine thus displays at the very beginning of

[1] Arch. Vat. Principi, I, 8, p. 227.

her life. During her lifetime she wrote hundreds of letters like this. Her influence was the cheapest coin she could use to reward old adherents or to make new ones and she found an enormous pleasure in using it. She was always anxious to do a favor, even if it was only the favor of an introduction or a recommendatory letter. This activity was not without motives of kindness, but her desire to let the recipient of this requested favor know that her intercession had helped him, is typical of almost all the letters of this sort.

The death of the Dauphin which made the seventeen-year-old daughter of Florentine bankers a prospective queen of France, was very sudden. On the 12th of August, 1536, he died, probably of pleurisy. But the following document, which was extensively published, shows what was thought of the death at the time:

"Lyons, September 6th 1536.

"Sentence to be torn by horses of Count Sebastian de Montecuculli for having plotted to poison the King and having succeeded in poisoning the oldest son of the King with arsenic powder put by him into a vase of red clay in the Maison de Plat at Lyons." [1]

The imagination of that generation and of succeeding generations was obsessed with the fear of poison. For a hundred years it was hardly possible for a prominent person to die off the battlefield without the suggestion being made that hate or interest had secretly brought about his death. Charles V about three years before had suspected Henry VIII of a design to poison his wife, Queen Katherine. He now in turn was to feel the sting of slander. The Count of Montecuculli under torture confessed; as all but a very few men always did confess under torture anything they were urged to confess. He said he had been sent to France by two of the chief counsellors of the Emperor Charles V to poison the King and his eldest son. The accusation,

[1] B. N. fds. fr. 3952 f. 150.

thoroughly believed in France,[1] was considered serious enough to deserve refutation in a rather long document published under the form of a private letter supposedly written by some one at the Imperial Court to a friend abroad. This begins:

"I have received your letters by which you give me word of the trial in France of an Italian accused of having poisoned the late Dauphin and of the rumor the King his father . . . is circulating . . . that the poisoning was brought about with the knowledge of the Emperor. I am astonished that you should think such a dishonest and wicked publication, sane. You know how the said King of France in order to avenge the shame of having been conquered by the Emperor, keeps all Christendom in strife and has even joined himself to the Turks and other infidels. . . . I hold that all this is false and published broadcast throughout all Christendom in order that the King of France . . . may have ostensible cause for continuing his enmity and war . . . and for refusing with this notable reason, every suggestion of peace and be able to excuse himself to all Christendom for doing so."

[1] Granvelle (1), II, 12, 500. Rel. I, 1, p. 204.

CHAPTER III

WIFE OF THE HEIR TO THE FRENCH THRONE

Even before the death of his brother, Henry had shown signs of a strong personal ambition. He had suggested claims in his wife's name to the Duchy of Florence and Urbino and had openly asserted, in letters written by his own hand, his claim to the Duchy of Milan.[1] He was now heir to the throne of France and his ambition might take a wider scope. He asked and obtained leave to go to the entrenched camp skillfully situated at the junction of the Rhone and the Durance; at the meeting corners of the three provinces of Languedoc, Dauphiny and Provence. Here, with a powerful army of more than thirty thousand men, the Grand Master of France, Anne de Montmorency, was holding the critical point in the French line of defense against the invading army of the Emperor, who had under his command more than fifty thousand men.

Anne de Montmorency was descended from a great Carolingian feudatory of the tenth century. His ancestors of the Middle Ages had maintained and extended the wealth and power of the family so that the head of the house deserved the title of Premier Baron of France. When Anne de Montmorency, who was one year older than Francis I, entered into his service, he rose rather rapidly and at the age of thirty-nine became one of the marshals of France. In the disastrous battle of Pavia, where the King was taken prisoner and all his chief captains killed or captured, Montmorency showed the greatest courage until his horse fell under him and he was compelled to surrender. He shared the prison of his royal master and when Francis returned

[1] N. Granvelle (1), II, 506.

home in March 1526, he made his companion Grand Master of France and Governor of the rich province of Languedoc. As Grand Master, Montmorency had regulated the magnificent ceremonies of the interview with the Pope at Marseille and the marriage of Catherine. Always quick and persistent at the game by which patronage was obtained, he secured a cardinal's hat for Odet, the oldest son of his dead brother, Marshal Châtillon. The boy was only fifteen and his appointment was against the canons of the church, but then none of the Montmorency sons or nephews was older.

Montmorency had not been, in the beginning, very much of a friend of Catherine, because he thought that the marriage was unwise and the dowry which came with the banker's daughter too small. But the young girl had done all she could to win the favor of the old courtier. Here is one of her early letters to him:

"My Cousin:

"I have received the letter which you wrote me assuring you that you have done me the greatest pleasure which is possible and I want to ask you to send me the news and that you do not write to me any more ceremoniously because you know well that you ought not to write so to me; which will be the end. Recommending myself very heartily to you,

"Your good cousin,

"Caterine." [1]

While her husband was at the camp Catherine wrote another letter to the Grand Master whose spelling is even more illiterate than this one:

"My Gossip:

"I got your letter in the night, by which I have heard that Madam the Grand Mistress has given birth to a child of which I am very glad, since I see what you write me that I can be a god-parent, because I was in great fear that I should not be and also my gossip take good care that Monseigneur [her hus-

[1] Letts. I, p. 3, n.

band] does not hurt himself, because I have heard it said that he fell the other day and came very near injuring himself.

"I beg you take good care of him, which will be the end. Recommending myself heartily to you,

Your good cousin and gossip,

"CATERINE."[1]

The Dauphin had been received in the camp with every demonstration of pleasure. The young nobility, who chafed under the inaction which the wise caution of the Grand Master imposed upon them, for he was fighting a Fabian campaign, hoped that he would lead them to attack the enemy. But the young prince had too much respect for the experienced general to be willing to trouble his plans in any way. That wise tact won the lasting loyalty of Montmorency and Henry's visit to the camp was the beginning of a confidence between the two men which ended only with death.

When the strategy of Montmorency had forced the disastrous retreat of the Emperor with the loss of half his army, the King's favor redoubled. In 1538 he was made Constable of France and for some years he really controlled the policy of the King. One of the Court secretaries wrote to the French Ambassador at London. "It seems to me that you had better always address your dispatches to the Grand Master even when he is not at court, for all the other ambassadors do it, and you will do well always to write to him a copy of any letter you send to the King." And the Venetian Ambassador wrote in 1538 of "the Constable who manages and governs all this kingdom alone as he wishes." Although he was the favorite and practically the sole minister of an ambitious and warlike king, Montmorency used his influence always in favor of peace; so much so that he was regarded as a Spanish partisan and falsely accused of being in the pay of the Emperor. It was chiefly due to his exertions that the ten years' truce of Nice (June 1538) was made between the Emperor and

[1] Letts. I, 3.

Francis I, in consequence of which Charles V visited the King of France at Paris. Thus triumphant both in war and diplomacy "with the superintendence of the affairs of state in his hand," the Constable Montmorency, the most powerful subject in Europe, gave more help to his friend the young Dauphin than he received from him.[1]

The personality of Prince Henry was of the kind that needed help at a court like that of Francis I. The King was a large handsome man of such tactful manners that everyone who talked with him went away satisfied. His personality was imposing. The Venetian Ambassador wrote of him, "The King has a royal presence, so much so that any one seeing him without knowing his face would say at once 'That is the King.' " He dressed magnificently, was never weary of pleasure and rode in a stag hunt nearly every day in the week. He used to say, that, when he was old and sick, he would be carried after the hounds in a litter and even added perhaps he would give orders for his dead body to be carried a-hunting in a coffin. His oldest son, Henry, who was also large, was a tireless hunter and one of the best young men in France at the dangerous game of the tournament. But he seemed of a melancholy, even saturnine disposition, so that there were many at court who affirmed that they had never seen him smile. It was not generally known that the black-haired young man of a pallid, almost livid complexion, was a good fellow among his intimates and the Venetian Ambassador writes: "I have seen him sometimes joke and make fun with his brother as if they were comrades rather than brothers." When he became King a few years later he developed among his intimates an occasional tendency to horseplay which made him shove a page into the water in joke and trap a councillor into tumbling into a moat. Henry did not get on very well with his father, while his younger brother Charles showed openly much greater delight in all his father's habits

[1] B. N. Clairambault, 5643 f., 336, ctd. Decrue (1). Rel. I, 1, p. 209. B. N. fds. fr. ctd. Decrue (1), 358.

and pleasures. Charles was undoubtedly the father's favorite, and much more popular at court and among the people than the Crown Prince. The court gossips whispered that there was jealousy and an incipient quarrel between the two brothers, who were of the most opposite possible natures.[1]

This supposition that the Constable could help the Dauphin more than the Dauphin could help him, is borne out by the facts connected with the Constable's sudden fall from power. The court was filled with intrigues and the power of the greatest officers of the crown uncertain. The Venetian Ambassador gives us a vivid picture of the situation:

"There are in France three principal titles whose holders have no equals. They are the Chancellor, the Constable and the Admiral. The Chancellor is the head of justice and has the great seal. The Constable is the first dignitary of France. He is Captain-General of the army and Lieutenant-General of the King. The Admiral may be called the Captain-General at sea. During my mission (two years) I have seen all three of these great officials at the top and at the bottom, because when I arrived at Court the Admiral was a prisoner accused of the most atrocious evil deeds. Two months later he was set at liberty, and in less than six months he was not only restored to his former dignity, but to greater authority than he ever had before, with a consequent depression of the Constable, who suddenly fell from that supreme influence he had with the King. The Chancellor was still at the height of his greatness when I left the Court . . . but when I arrived at Turin I heard that he had been sent as a prisoner to the tower at Bourges." [2]

The Constable was left open to his enemies by the failure of his peace policy. The Emperor refused to keep his promise to marry his daughter to Francis' second son, with the Duchy of Milan as dot and war became inevitable. The Constable accepted the situation and did his best to help the King prepare, but, unfortunately for him, there was

[1] Rel. I, 1, p. 336, ib. 4, pp. 44, 47, ib. 2, p. 93.
[2] Rel. I, 4, p. 36.

a jealous quarrel between the two most influential women at court and the power of the Constable became the bone of contention in it. These rivals were not the Queen and the Dauphiness, but the mistresses of their respective husbands; the Duchesse d'Etampes and Diane de Poitiers. The Duchesse d'Etampes hated the Constable so heartily that one day when his name was mentioned, she cried out, "He is a great scoundrel: he fooled the King by saying the Emperor would give him at once the Duchy of Milan when he knew all the while he would not do it." The mistress of the Dauphin and her friends had no chance against the mistress of the King, playing upon his disappointment and ill humor with his old servant. Power was withdrawn from Constable Montmorency and so many slights put upon him that, in December 1540, he asked permission to retire to his estates. The King granted him permission with affectionate phrases and added as he said good-by "I cannot find more than one fault in you and that is that you do not love those whom I love." Braving the hostility of the King's mistress the Constable reappeared occasionally at court, until an unmistakable hint made it evident to him that his presence was not wanted. At the ceremonies which marked the engagement to marry of Jeanne d'Albret, Princess of Navarre, and the Duke of Cleves, the little fiancée had so long and heavy a train that she could not walk the whole length of the aisle to the altar. The King, turning to the Constable, ordered him to carry her. The next day he left the court of Francis I forever. (May 1541.) A few months later he asked for permission to return, but received a tart refusal with the word that if he came without permission he would be sorry for it. He kept the sword of the Constable and the wand of the Grand Master, but he had neither authority nor influence so long as Francis I lived.[1]

Caught between two jealous women, both of whom despised her, and without the aid of the great functionary who had begun to be her friend, Catherine saw that her

[1] A. N. K. ctd. Decrue 400, State Papers VIII, 501.

only defense was the favor of the King. Originally she had not possessed it. The failure of her uncle, the Pope, to carry out the secret agreements of her marriage contract, had prejudiced her father-in-law against her. About two years after her marriage the Spanish Ambassador wrote, "The Duchess of Orleans is always treated according to the customary honors of her rank, but some of her ladies-in-waiting tell me that they heard the King say he had not been well advised in marrying his son to her." [1]

In spite of this handicap, she succeeded in gaining and keeping the liking of her father-in-law. Francis was perhaps the greatest living patron of literature and art and he seems to have really loved them; while with many of the great patrons of the Renascence, patronage was to a considerable extent a mere matter of fashion and another means of expressing an exaggerated egotism. The sign and symbol of the New Learning was a knowledge of Greek. No one who did not possess at least a smattering of that language could pretend to the title of a Humanist. Catherine therefore began to study Greek. The Venetian Ambassador reports that she made such great progress that it astonished everybody at court, but it is difficult to find any sign that she ever got very much out of her study of Greek except a chance to please her father-in-law.

Even greater than Francis' liking for letters and art was his passion for hunting. He had formed what he called "the Little Band" of the court ladies, who seemed to him the prettiest and most agreeable. With these he frequently went off on hunting trips. The Dauphiness begged to be allowed to go along, and she proved to be such a good sportswoman that he finally gave her a standing permission to hunt with him whenever she wanted to. She was a bold rider and looked well in the saddle. She apparently introduced into France something like the modern side-saddle. Brantôme says that it was suggested to him by some of her ladies in waiting, that she did this in order to make the

[1] Cal. Span. 1535, p. 35.

best possible use of her natural advantages for the display of the fine hosiery for whose quality and proper adjustment she took the greatest care. But then Brantôme was more than a little inclined to take gossip for gospel. On one of these parties her horse, which had been carelessly bitted by the groom, bolted with her, broke the horn of the saddle against the roof of a shed and threw her to the ground so hard that she was very badly bruised. The King took such affectionate care of her that Catherine could hardly have regretted this first of a number of accidents which befell her because of her fondness for riding.[1]

Probably the ladies, who signed the following letter to Francis I, were members of the "Little Band."

"To My Sovereign Lord the King:

"Monseigneur, our unspeakable joy deprives us of sense and control of the pen to write to you, for, although the capture of Hesdin [surrendered to Francis I by the Spaniards in the spring of 1537] was confidently expected, nevertheless we have been since Monday so full of fear of everything that was to be feared, that we were half dead and this morning this messenger revived us with such a marvellous consolation that, after running one to other to announce the good news more by tears of joy than by words, we have come here with the Queen to join in praising Him who in all your affairs has granted you His favor. We assure you, monseigneur, that the Queen embraced both the messenger and all of us, who share her joy, so that we hardly know what we do or what we are writing you. Please excuse us if we are transported by the joy we know you feel. Praying the Eternal Father, who remembered His David and His loving kindness, to continue to you as He has done and will do His love and grace, etc. . . . Monseigneur, before I close, the Queen has ordered me to beg you with all the ladies that you would be pleased to order us to come and see you whenever you may choose, because with St. Thomas we shall not be content until we have seen our King revived by a happy victory and very humbly we beg you for this favour."

This letter was signed, "Your very humble and obedient subjects: Catherine, Marguerite [the King's daughter],

[1] Neg. Tosc. III, 140, 158, Brant. VII, 344.

Marguerite [his sister], Marguerite [Marguerite of Bourbon], Anne [the King's mistress.]" [1]

Catherine needed the friendship of the King because the greatest trial and danger of her life was close at hand. When she had been married nine years without giving birth to a child, it was suggested that it would be well for the Dauphin to divorce her and marry again in order that there might be heirs for the throne. Both the King and her husband seemed at first to listen to this suggestion enough to consider seriously acting upon it. Catherine, hearing of it, went first to her husband, who "because he loved her" (in spite of the fact that he also loved Diane much more) was easily persuaded to give up the idea. She then went to the King, to whom she said: "She had heard that it was his intention to give another woman as wife to her husband and, since it had not, up to the present time, pleased God to grant her the grace to have sons, it seemed to her quite proper that he did not think it best to wait any longer to provide properly for the succession of heirs for so great a kingdom. Her gratitude to him because he had deigned to accept her as a daughter-in-law, was so great that she did not propose to resist the will of His Majesty, but rather to bear that great grief. She had therefore resolved either to enter into a convent, or rather, if it was pleasing to His Majesty, to remain in the train of the fortunate woman who was to be the wife of her husband." She said these words to King Francis. He, being of a noble and generous disposition, was so much moved that he said to her, "My daughter, have no fear. Since God has willed that you should be my daughter-in-law and wife of the Dauphin, I do not wish to make any change and perhaps it will please Almighty God in this matter to grant to you and to me the gift we so much long for." [2]

Nearly twenty years later Catherine still kept a bitter memory of this great danger which she had averted by her

[1] Letts. X, 1.
[2] Rel. I, 4, p. 73.

ready tongue. In a letter to her daughter written in 1581 she makes a veiled allusion to the Cardinal of Lorraine and his brother the Duke of Guise as "those who wanted to take away from me your father," and this accusation against them passed over into the controversial literature of that period. It can hardly be true. At the time when this plan was discussed Charles, afterwards Cardinal of Lorraine, was a brilliant lad of seventeen. So great was his reputation that the King appointed him tutor to the Dauphin, and although six years younger than his pupil, Charles of Lorraine soon acquired great influence with him, which he increased by assiduous court to Prince Henry's mistress Diana. While therefore it is barely possible that Catherine's suspicion was founded on fact, it is highly probable that it was the result of her life-long hatred for the Cardinal of Lorraine; a hatred which began secretly when she saw him assiduously flattering the carelessly kind rival who had stolen from her the husband she loved with all her heart. This story is probably like that other story, circulated when the Cardinal of Lorraine had become the best hated man in France, that the dying King Francis solemnly warned the future Henry II against the Cardinal and his brother the Duke of Guise, in a prophecy which became popular in a couplet: "The late King foresaw this point that those of the House of Guise would strip his children to their waistcoats and his poor people to their shirts." Neither of these young men had enough power and influence during the reign of Francis I to have attracted his particular attention.[1]

This danger, that Catherine might be repudiated by her husband, like the former Dauphiness Jeanne, daughter of Louis XI, and like her contemporary, Queen Katherine of England, because she had not borne children, was forever put aside by the birth, on the nineteenth day of January, 1543, of her son Francis (afterwards Francis II). His birth was followed in rapid succession by that of nine other chil-

[1] Letts. I, 591, Condé VI, 13, B. N. Port. Font. 299 f. 26.

dren: April, 1545, Elizabeth (afterwards Queen of Spain); September, 1547, Claude, afterwards Duchess of Lorraine; 1548, Louis, who died in 1550; June, 1550, Charles, afterwards Charles IX of France; September, 1551, Alexander Edward, who after a change of name, reigned as Henry III; May, 1553, Marguerite, afterwards Queen of Navarre; March, 1554, Hercules, afterwards Duke of Anjou and Duke of Brabant; twins, Victoire and Jeanne, born in 1556, one of whom died immediately and the other lived but seven weeks.

The first news of the chance of the fulfilment of Catherine's pious hopes that God would send her a child to be the future King of France, was sent to the great family friend now in disgrace:

"To My Gossip the Constable:
"My Gossip:

"Because I know so well that you wish as much as I do to see my children, I want to write to tell you that I hope to have a child, being certain that there is no one who will be more glad of it than you. As this hope is the beginning of all my prosperity and happiness, so I trust to bring it to fruition: for which I pray God and that He will give you what you desire.

"Your good cousin & gossip,
"Caterine."

The Constable gave this interest in her first child which Catherine bespoke before his birth. Four years later the Venetian Ambassador reports that the boy and his little sister are being cared for at the L'Isle Adam, one of the Constable's stately houses.[1]

Although she bore him ten children, Catherine did not have her husband's heart. He always showed her affection and outward respect, but his love was for Diana, called Madame la Seneschale, afterwards made Duchess of Valentinois, to whom he was bound by an infatuation that ended only with her death. At an epoch when he was twenty-

[1] B. N. fds. fr. 3952; Les Aages des enfans du Roi Henri II, Letts. I, 6. Rel. I, 2, p. 179.

FRANCIS II AND HIS WIFE, MARY STUART, QUEEN OF SCOTLAND

QUEEN CATHERINE DE MÉDICIS IN HER YOUTH WHEN SHE WAS MARRIED TO HENRY, DUKE OF ORLEANS, AFTERWARDS KING OF FRANCE

THE SECOND SON OF CATHERINE AND HER TWIN DAUGHTERS, WHO DIED SHORTLY AFTER THEIR BIRTH

From the prayer-book of Catherine de Médicis, made to be swung from a chain at the girdle—now in the Louvre

seven and Diana forty-seven, the Venetian Ambassador suggested that many people believed the relation between them was a maternal one; that Diana had trained Henry in princely manners and virtue. He considered this training very successful, for he said the Prince, who had been at first a rather light and foolish person, was now just the contrary and in particular he seemed to be much more attentive to his wife than he had been before he came under the influence of Diana.[1] But this information is not correct. In spite of the fact that her great rival at court, the King's mistress, the Duchess d'Etampes, was accustomed to mention negligently the fact that she had been born the day that Madame la Seneschale was married, it seemed to be true of Diana as of Cleopatra that "age cannot wither her nor custom stale her infinite variety." After he became king, Henry visited her every day, at the close of business, before he visited his wife, and it is evident from all reports of the French court that, both in matters of the head and matters of the heart, Diana had far more influence over him than the mother of his children.

This following of the example of his father in publicly installing a sort of official mistress, does not seem to have been regarded as particularly shocking. Catherine herself, when her husband had been dead more than twenty years, writing to Henry of Navarre, who had illtreated his wife, Catherine's daughter Marguerite, in connection with his mistress, held up to him the example of her own husband. "You are not the first husband, young and not very wise in such things. But I find that you are indeed the first and the only husband who after an affair of this kind could talk as you have to his wife. The affair of Madame Valentinois was like that of Madame d'Etampes in all honor and he would have been very much annoyed if I had wished to keep near me and in my service anyone who desired to make a scandal out of it." [2] The maitresse en titre was not

[1] Rel. I, 1, p. 243.
[2] Letts. VIII, 36.

Catherine's only rival. Henry had a child by a Scotch woman, Madame Flamange or Fleming, and also by a Savoyarde Nicole de Savigny and a third by an Italian mistress.

Catherine was able after twenty years to look back with complacence on her enforced sufferance of her husband's infidelity, but she suffered at the time the tortures of a very terrible jealousy. We know this, not only from the gossip of Brantôme, but also from what Catherine did after Henry's death. She ordered the trunks and chests of Madame Fleming broken open and searched, and all letters and papers in them sent to her. Nicole de Savigny wrote the Cardinal Granvella in October, 1564, that "she had with her the little Saint Henry, that the Duchess of Savoy would give testimony that he was the son of the late good King Henry and also that since his death I have suffered great cruelty." [1]

After the retirement from court of their powerful friend, the Constable, neither Catherine nor her husband had been able to exert any political influence. For later a Venetian Ambassador writes of Henry II, "When His Majesty came to the crown, he was entirely without experience in affairs, because the King his father had not allowed him to take any part in the government." Finding herself without influence in France, Catherine used her influence in the only place where she possessed any, in Italy. We have fifty-seven of the letters which she wrote between the disgrace of the Constable and the death of Francis I (September, 1541, to March, 1547). Three are about her children. The rest are addressed to Italy. Three of these were written to her girlhood friends, the nuns of the Murate, asking for their prayers; five are addressed to the Duke of Ferrara and six to the Cardinal Farnese, the rest are to the Duke or Duchess of Florence.[2]

The first Duke of Florence, Catherine's half-brother

[1] B. N. fds. fr. 6618 f. 20, Granvelle (1) VIII, 386.
[2] 30 in Letts. 27, in my copies of unprinted originals.

Alexander, had been murdered in January, 1537, by his young comrade and distant relative, Lorenzino de' Medici. He was succeeded by Cosimo, Catherine's first cousin, with whom during some years of her childhood she had been brought up, but for whom she seems to have had no affection comparable to her love for her cousins the Strozzi. Seven of these Italian letters are letters of compliment, as when, for instance, she sent Cosimo six hunting dogs and his wife four hackneys. The other thirty-four were written to use her influence in favor of her friends and to let them know it. She writes with eloquent regrets to her cousin who had asked her to get something done at the Court of France; "I wish that the thing had turned out differently and if I had only possessed greater influence, etc.," and she turned with the greatest zest to quarters where she might be able to pull the wires of social and political power. Now she seeks a position for a man who has passed "The greatest part of his life in the service of our house and who is already arrived at old age where he cannot stand the work which is required in following the court here; . . . I beg you, my cousin, that . . . for my sake, you will employ him in some place where he can have during the rest of his life such a position as he well deserves." [1] Now she asks promotion for some relative of one of the maids of honor who followed her from Florence. Frequently she suggests an interference with the courts of justice; though this is always veiled under decorous terms. The following specimen letters will serve to show the bent of Catherine's mind during these five or six years.

"To the Duke of Florence:
"My Cousin:

"I have written you several times in favor of the affairs of Messire Pandolph, who carries this letter and also about certain monies which he and his brothers claim are due to them from us, and, although my cousin I know and hold myself assured that you wish in this instance and in all others to act towards him

[1] Letts. I, 12, Arch. Med. 4726, f. 4.

according to justice and reason, nevertheless I have desired to write you the present letter and to beg you very affectionately that, for my sake, you will show him all the graciousness which you can and help him with your favor in such a way that he may recognize that my favor has been of service to him with you. If you gratify me in this, I shall esteem the pleasure which you may do to him as done to me and as one which I should always be ready to return to you or to your servitors whenever you wish to employ me. And in this place I recommend myself to you out of a very good heart; out of which I pray our Lord to give you what you desire.

"Written at Evreulx this 27th day of September 1542.

"Your good cousin,

"CATERINE." [1]

To Cardinal Farnese, Legate of Avignon:

"MY COUSIN:

"It is now a long time since for my sake you promised to give to the prior of Vallence, brother of the procurer general of Monseigneur (her husband) and also mine, the first prebend which should fall vacant in your church of Saint Agricol in Avignon. . . . Nevertheless you have since written to your vicar of Avignon to give it to one of your own people. For this reason my cousin I wish to write you and to beg you again to bestow the first prebend which falls vacant upon the said Vallence. . . . And in return, if I can do anything for any of your people, I will employ myself in it with a very good heart; out of which I recommend myself to you and pray God, etc.

"At Paris the 20th day of February 1544.

"Your good cousin,

"CATERINE." [2]

"TO THE DUKE OF FLORENCE:

"MY COUSIN:

"I have written to you before to beg you for my sake to set free from prison Anthoine Gazzette, brother of one of my young women whom I brought with me when I came to France. Since I have not had any answer from you and have heard that the said Anthoine is still kept prisoner, I want to beg you again to set him free for my sake. And if he has done any evil to you

[1] Arch. Med. 4726 f. 4.

[2] Arch. Nap.; Arch. Med. 4726 f. 41.

. . . pardon it and you will give me very great pleasure. Praying God my cousin, etc.

"Written at Saint Germain en Laye the sixteenth day of January 1547.

"Your good cousin,
"CATERINE."

At this time Catherine counted the future Admiral Coligny and his brother among her intimate friends. So she wrote the following note:

"TO THE DUCHESS OF FLORENCE:
"MY COUSIN:

"The brothers Châtillon and d'Andelot, gentlemen of the chamber of Monsieur and others of their company, have determined to make a trip to Notre Dame de Lorette and they plan during this voyage to see the entire country of Italy and chiefly your city of Florence, because of the good renown which it has. Because they are personages whom Monsieur and I hold in very high esteem, I have begged them, my cousin, to visit you and to tell you all the news about me, which, thank God, is very good. I assure you that you will do me a very great pleasure by showing these gentlemen all the favor which you can and I shall be as grateful to you as if you had shown this favor to myself. Here I close, praying God, etc.

"From Argilly this 28th day of September [probably 1546].

"Your good cousin,
"CATERINE." [1]

The following letter written toward the close of this period suggests that Catherine was beginning to find consolation for some of her troubles in the love of her children, which remained very strong up to the end of her life.

"MONS. DE HUMIÈRES:

"I have received a letter which you have written me and you have given me a very great pleasure in sending me news of my children [these were Francis and Elizabeth, one not quite four and the other less than two years old]. I am very glad that Madame de Humières has arrived because she will be able to help you take care of my said infants. Monsieur and I do not

[1] Arch. Med. 4726 f. 53.

recommend them to your care because of the assurance that we already have of the great care which you and Madame de Humières will give to them. I beg you, Mons. de Humières, to continue to send me often news of them because you cannot do a greater pleasure to Monsieur and to me.

"Written at Compiègne the 21st day of December 1546.

"La byen vostre,

"CATERINE." [1]

The father also wrote the same day to the governor of his son:

"I have received your letter of the 9th day of this present month by which I understand very fully the news of my children and also the account of my son who doesn't wish any longer to be dressed like a woman, for which I am glad. And it is entirely reasonable that he should have trousers when he asks for them, because I do not have any doubt that he understands perfectly well what he needs." [2]

Henry II was an affectionate father whose correspondence was continuously occupied with the care of his children and Margeret remembered afterwards with great pleasure how he used to take her on his knee to talk to her.

[1] Letts. I, p. 17.
[2] Letts. I, 18, n.

CHAPTER IV

QUEEN OF FRANCE

Francis I died in March, 1547, in his fifty-third year. The powerful big-boned man who had once been able to keep his seat in the tilting yard against any gentleman of France, was worn out by worry, fatigue and evil pleasures. As one of his nobles afterwards wrote, "Women rather than years killed him."

At the age of twenty-eight Catherine became Queen of France. Her husband, Henry II, was just her own age, possessed of great strength and endurance and very skillful in all fashionable games. He was still thought to be of a somewhat melancholy disposition because he was not much of a talker; though it was noticed that in defense of his own opinions, which he held very firmly, he spoke quite freely. He had no reputation for intellectual brilliance like his father, but was considered to have a solid judgment which would improve with years. He was very temperate in his meats and drinks, but inclined to take an excessive amount of exercise because of his love of sport. He rose every day at dawn and immediately entered into council upon the pressing affairs of the kingdom. He was pious, for he gave himself most devoutly every morning to prayer, and in spite of his love of horses he always refused to ride on Sunday morning. After the morning council he went every day to mass. In this way, writes the Venetian Ambassador, "by his example he inspires his people with the spirit of religion and shows himself worthy of the name of the Most Christian King." He was at his accession exceedingly popular among the common people and he immediately increased his popularity by remitting taxes imposed by his father and beginning to cut down

the enormous expenses of Francis I's court. It was indeed time that some relief should come to a burdened people. A few years before the Venetian Ambassador reported that a friend who lived in Normandy had told him the peasants were fleeing with their little children on their backs in despair, not knowing where to turn because the taxes had taken all they had. He asked some of them where they were going and they answered "Where God wills. We can't stay any longer here." [1]

The pity was that Henry's financial reforms lasted but a short time. His reckless generosity, the renewed extravagance of his court and his wars, soon made taxes worse than before. The splendid ceremonial of Catherine's coronation suggests how some of the money went. It took place on a high scaffold built in the Church of St. Denis and carpeted with cloth of gold; except the steps covered with crimson damask embroidered with gold. Four other scaffolds filled the church; for the Princes, the Chevaliers of the Order of St. Michel, together with the Gentlemen of the King's Chamber, the Ambassadors and the Queen's ladies-in-waiting. These were covered by cloth of gold and violet velvet embroidered with lilies and the benches were draped in cloth of gold and silver. Catherine's mantle was velvet embroidered with gold lilies and lined with ermine. The headdress gleamed with jewels and her waist was adorned with great diamonds, rubies and emeralds. Her heavy train was carried by the two Duchesses of Montpensier and the Princess de la Roche Sur Yon and "her whole costume was of such excellence and value that the price was incalculable." [2]

The first thing the new King did was to make a clean sweep of all his father's Councillors and so far as he could of the chief officers of state. The more active, important officials of the late King might think themselves lucky if they escaped arrest and charges of peculation. The only

[1] Rel. I, 1, p. 242, ib. 2, pp. 172, 279, ib. 4, p. 39.
[2] Sacre de Dame C. de M. Jean Dallier, 1549.

man to escape shelving or prosecution was Francis Olivier the Chancellor, "A person of such rare virtue that there was no office above his merit." [1] But there were some influential people who could not be dismissed cavalierly because they had a standing not entirely dependent on the King who wore the crown. Twelve of the French Cardinals were at court. Seven of these Princes of the Church were now told that it was necessary for them to go to Rome to be ready, in case the octogenarian Pope died, to elect a successor friendly to France. Marshal du Biez was disgraced. The old man lost his Order of St. Michel and his son-in-law his head. A second Marshal, Robert de la Marck, had married Diana's daughter and could be depended upon by the new administrators. The third, the Neapolitan Prince of Melfi, also escaped enmity.

Henry, during the last two years of his father's reign, had been so strongly opposed to the policy of state that he refused to come to the meetings of the royal council, because he thought they did everything badly and he would be blamed for it afterwards. This clean sweep of the crown councillors was therefore to be expected, and it was equally natural that he should replace them by men who had faced his father's anger and shared disgrace with him. Ever since the time the Constable Montmorency had nursed Prince Henry through a severe illness, the Prince had cherished for him a sort of filial respect greater than that he felt for his own father, and almost the first act of King Henry II was to restore his old friend to the exercise of all the authority implied by his titles. The seasoned statesman regained under the son more power than he had lost under the father six years before. The Venetian Ambassador reports: "It seems as if the King did not know how to do or say anything without the Constable and so makes him do and say everything; so that it can almost be said that one is the breath of the other." [2]

[1] De Thou, I, 246.
[2] Rel. I, 2, p. 176.

As the Constable's own children were still too young to enter into active service, the three sons of his sister by her first husband, Marshal Châtillon, rose with him. Odet had been made cardinal of Châtillon in 1533 at the age of sixteen. He rapidly accumulated the Archbishopric of Toulouse, the Bishopric of Beauvais and other rich benefices which brought him in 60,000 scudi a year.[1] The next brother, Gaspard de Coligny, became the Colonel General of Infantry and Admiral, which gave him successively the two most important positions in case of war next that of the Constable. In addition he was made Governor of the border province of Picardy. His brother, Francis, Seigneur d'Andelot, from which Seigneurie he took his usual title, succeeded his brother as the Colonel General of Infantry.

Along side of the grizzled Constable, the new King placed high in his favor another counsellor, Charles of Lorraine, Archbishop of Rheims, then twenty-two years old. It was his duty as Archbishop of Rheims to consecrate the King and, through the King's influence with the Pope, he received the red hat of a cardinal the day after he had performed that ceremony. He took the name of the Cardinal of Guise, and drew the incomes of four Archbishoprics, five bishoprics and many abbeys. His younger brother, Francis, Duke of Aumale, rose with him and became a member of the Royal Council. These two young favorites of the King were of a family which possessed great ecclesiastical influence and strong backing outside of France. Their father Claude, Duke of Guise, was a brother of the reigning Duke of Lorraine. Their uncle, Cardinal John of Lorraine, was the wealthiest ecclesiastic in France, and their sister Mary, the widow of James V of Scotland, was, as dowager queen, the leading influence in that country, nominally ruled by her infant daughter Mary. Their four brothers rapidly accumulated another cardinal's hat, the office of Grand Prior, and a marquisate, which, with the Duchy of Guise inherited by Francis at the death of

[1] B. N. It. 1727 f. 245.

his father and the Duchy of Aumale which he then handed over to Claude Junior, made the family of Guise, although inferior to the Montmorency in wealth, their rivals in power.

In the early days of King Henry's reign there was, however, no outward sign of any rivalry between these two great and rising houses, and the Constable urged the red hat for the Archbishop of Rheims. But even then a shrewd observer like the Modenese Ambassador foresaw trouble; for he wrote within a month of Henry's accession, "The Constable and the younger members of the House of Lorraine every day and every hour give expression to their mutual affection. I have seen the Archbishop of Rheims make court to his Excellency and go to meet him and accompany him to the table and dine with him. Yet all are of the opinion that in the end the House of Lorraine will beat him to the ground though it cannot happen at once." [1]

Besides the two Guise and the Constable, the King also put into his new Council of Affairs the Duke of Vendôme, head of the princely house of Bourbon which was descended from the youngest son of St. Louis. The house had been in the past enormously rich, Charles, Constable of France and Duke of Bourbon, had been considered the richest lord in all Christendom. But his treason in deserting Francis I for the service of the Emperor because of wrong done to him by the King's mother, had brought about the confiscation of the largest part of the family estates. The Duke of Vendôme was therefore in the difficult position of having a very high position and very little money to support it. One brother, Charles, had indeed two bishopries, another was Count of Soissons, and the youngest was Prince of Condé, but there was much more title than property in this younger branch of the Royal House of France. The King helped this by giving another archbishopric to the ecclesiastical brother and getting for him a cardinal's hat. For Antony he arranged a marriage with Jeanne d'Albret,

[1] Arch. Mod. ctd. Whitehead, 32.

heiress of the little kingdom of Navarre, which lay astride the Pyrenees, in the western part of France. The kingdom to which Jeanne was heiress was small, because the best part of it, which lay south of the mountains, had been seized in 1512 by the King of Spain; but she was both Queen and Princess of the Blood, for her mother was the aunt of Henry II.

Besides these representatives of three great families of ancient lineage, the King put into his privy council two men whose name was not illustrious and whose position had been very recently won, Jean de Saint André and his son Jacques. Jacques' grandfather was the first one of the family in the royal service. At his death in 1502 he was counsellor and chamberlain of Louis XII. His son had continued in the King's service and was made in 1530 chevalier of the order of St. Michel. Soon after he was named one of the governors of the royal children, and Henry, Duke of Orleans, the future King, was put especially under his care. He introduced into the service of his young charge his son Jacques, who was then about twenty years old, and a very warm friendship immediately began to form between the younger and the older lad. The new King put both father and son into the privy council and, within two months of his accession to the throne, he made Jacques a chevalier of the order of St. Michel and a marshal of France.

It was the general opinion at court that Diana had an overmastering influence in the new King's choice of councillors. There is reason to suspect that gossip gave Diana more influence in these appointments than she really had, but the court was quite right in assuming that the Queen scarcely counted in the matter. Catherine had little or nothing to do with placing on the paths that led to power the men whose lives were for many years to be so entangled with her fortunes. Some of them, like Montmorency and his nephews, she had long considered her friends. Some of them, like the Guise, who had been too subservient to

her rival, she already regarded with carefully suppressed dislike.

That the men the King honored should, under these circumstances, pay more assiduous court to the mistress than to the wife, was to be expected. Francis I had made gallantry a large part of court life and the influence of women, and that means largely the vicious influence of woman, never declined under his son and grandsons. The splendors of the court of the last Valois Kings were fairly soaked in sex appeal. That stout and savage fighting man, old Marshal Monluc, who had seen fifty years of it, wrote, addressing the King about army appointments, "the first comer who asks of you the command of a company of infantry, without considering the harm that may come of it to your realm, you readily give it to him only for the asking of the first lady who begs you to do it, because perhaps she made herself agreeable to you at the last ball: for no matter what becomes of the public business the balls must be made a success. Sire, these women have entirely too much influence at your court." [1]

To the men he put in authority the King at once began to distribute large gifts, for he was possessed by a passion for that hail fellow well met sort of generosity which has injured so many kings and burdened so many peoples. To Diana he gave immediately the right of confirmation of all the offices of the kingdom, a privilege for which he had refused 300,000 francs. An arrangement was made by which the Constable was to receive 300,000 francs of back pay and a large sum was given to the Count of Aumale to pay his debts. The imperial ambassador at the French Court wrote within a few weeks of the accession of the new King: "They say here that the King since his accession to this kingdom has given away more than two millions of francs including gifts made to Diana, which will amount to an infinite sum." This was two-fifths of the income of

[1] Monluc, Comm., III, 460, Soc. H. Fr.

the chief taxes of France as estimated by the Venetian Ambassador a few years before.[1]

The new King showed a vigorous intention of getting first hand information about his kingdom by starting on a tour of inspection of the frontier provinces. The point of danger was Piedmont, the north-western part of Italy, which had been conquered by Francis I twelve years before. The King's journey to and from its capital, Turin, became a series of costly triumphal entries, the most splendid of which was at Lyons in September, 1548. Lyons was a place where great roads from Paris, the cities of the Rhine, Switzerland and Rome, northwest Italy and Spain, met. This great trading and mail centre was also the most important banking city of Central Europe, and its exchanges reached from Rome and Venice to Antwerp and London.

Catherine met her husband at Lyons and the wealthy city whose leading merchants and bankers were largely Italian, gave the King and Queen one of the most magnificent receptions which any King of France, or indeed any ruler, had ever enjoyed. It was filled, of course, with that rather pinch-beck imitation of antiquity which was characteristic of those years when the impulse of the Renascence was spreading and at the same time going somewhat to seed. One of the most admired spectacles was a combat of twelve gladiators, clothed, six in white satin and the others in crimson satin, "their costumes made according to Roman antiquity." They fought with two-handed swords and the King liked it so much that he asked to see it again six days later. Another number on the program was a combat between galleys on the river, exactly imitated from the galleys on the ancient Roman monuments. The city also gave the King a great spectacle entitled "The Hunting of Diana." The relation to contemporary history of this scene from ancient mythology could not escape any spectator, and it must have been rather hard for Queen Catherine to make her entry immediately

[1] Imp. Amb. Arch. Belg. pntd. Rev. Hist. V, 117, Neg. Fr. II, 87.

upon the heels of the pageant. The Spanish Ambassador wrote to Prince Philip, "I am sending your Highness a printed account of the King's entry into Lyons. I was present myself and I can assure you that it is accurate. It is indeed true that little could be seen when the Queen made her entry, because night came on. Her welcome was very warm: and the people say that, as she is not good looking, the King gave orders that her pageant should be kept back until a late hour, so that her Highness should pass unnoticed." [1]

The court gossip, Brantôme, afterwards gave a somewhat different account. "The Queen entered accompanied by the Queen of Navarre, Marguerite, the King's aunt and by several princesses, great ladies and maids of honor. And inasmuch as the day was failing and the night surprised that entry of the Queen, all at once in a moment one saw the whole city of Lyons on fire with flambeaux, torches, lights in the windows, in the shops, in the streets, so much so that it was possible to see as clearly as in the daytime; which was very fortunate because the beams of those torches accompanied those of the eyes of those beautiful ladies and rivaled each other, as it were, in making light and clearness everywhere."

It is somewhat doubtful how dominant a political influence in the actual policy of state was exercised by the mistress who was thus publicly acknowledged by the second city of the kingdom. Contemporary observers took her enormous political influence for granted, but her surviving correspondence does not make it evident, and modern writers are inclined to deny that there are any proofs of it. Whatever may have been true of Diana, Catherine confined herself at this time entirely and with great success to the rôle of submissive wife, careful mother and titular head of a splendid court. But one thing she did succeed in doing which was of a semi-political nature. Henry began his reign with a dislike of Italians. The Imperial Ambassador wrote,

[1] Brant, III, 250; Cal. Span. 6 Jan. 1549.

"An infinite number of new Italians is coming to this court in a continuous stream, to offer their services to the King, and they are received with polite speeches. But when it comes to giving them a place on the pension list it is not done. They don't even pay the old pensions to those of that nation who have held them a long time." It was probably due to the quiet and persistent influence of Catherine that Henry's original dislike of too much Italian influence at court was so modified that he came to employ a large number of them in subordinate civil positions as well as in the army; a thing not in itself astonishing because, in addition to the very close commercial, social, literary and artistic relations between France and Italy which had existed for a long while, he had inherited the conquests made by his father north of the Alps. During the last eight years of his twelve years' reign, the court was often composed of more Italians than Frenchmen, a great crowd of strangers, "diplomats, soldiers, clergymen, merchants, engineers, poets, artists, couriers, spies, fools and courtisans." [1]

The most conspicuous of these families who had sought with success their fortunes in France, were particular friends with protégés of Catherine. They were the sons of an aunt whose husband had been a Florentine nobleman of the house of Strozzi, supposed to be, after the Fuggers of Augsburg, the richest bankers in the world. Driven out of Florence for political reasons, the oldest, Piero Strozzi, arrived at the French court soon after Catherine's marriage, at the head of a band of harquebusiers magnificently mounted and equipped. Francis I took him into his service, but Piero never rose to any very important position under him. At Francis' death he and his three brothers were in Italy and immediately started for France, bringing with them splendid gifts for the Queen. The new King made

[1] E. G. Lemonnier, Whitehead, Imp. Amb. June, 1547, pntd. Rev. Hist. V, 115. Romier (1), I, 31.

him a gentleman of the bedchamber with a large pension and, the day after the ceremony of crowning, he received, together with Coligny, the collar of the order of St. Michel. He was also appointed captain-general of the Italian infantry and finally became a Marshal of France. His brother Leone was made a gentleman of the bedchamber and appointed captain-general of the Royal galleys. The youngest brother, Lorenzo, was in the church. He had already received, probably by Catherine's favor, several abbeys in Piedmont. The King now gave him the Bishopric of Béziers and wrote at once to the Pope asking for him a cardinal's hat. A fourth brother, Roberto, became head of the great bank and divided his time between Rome and Venice, with occasional visits to Lyons. The existence of this great Strozzi bank suggests, of course, that there was another reason for the favor which Henry showed to the Strozzi besides the influence of Catherine. The family fortune was of great service to him in his finance and the banker was also able by his position and influence at Rome to render great services to the diplomacy of the King.[1]

It is in connection with these protégés that Catherine has left the first authentic record of herself as a most submissive wife. Leone Strozzi, General of the Galleys, had a desperate quarrel with a brother-in-law of the Constable who was acting Admiral. Leone got the suspicion that his enemy had hired one of his own followers, a man whom he had ransomed from slavery, to murder him. He put the suspected follower on board his galley and tortured him until he compelled him to say that this accusation was true. He then stabbed him and threw him overboard. Soon after he deserted the fleet with two galleys and took refuge at Malta. When she heard of it, Catherine wrote to her husband the first of her few letters to him which have survived.

[1] Romier (1), etc., Chap. IV.

"To My Lord the King:
"My Lord:

"I have heard by Brésé that which it has pleased you to command him to say to me and I assure you that I have never had anything trouble me more, not for his sake unless it is to think that he is drowned; because the greatest pleasure that I could have would be to hear that it had pleased God to drown him when he took that resolution, but to see the fault which he has committed in your service at the very moment when I was hoping that he would do you as great a service as any servitor you had. . . . But My Lord I beg you very humbly that, although he is so unfortunate, he may not be able to make his family unfortunate, because I am sure that there isn't one of them who doesn't want him at the bottom of the sea, and who, if he could get hold of him, wouldn't make of him an example for all those who should ever wish to do anything like this—and principally his brother Piero, whom I recommend to you My Lord. . . . I beg you to forgive me if I bore you with so long a letter and excuse me when you remember the chagrin I feel that a person of whom I have so often talked to you and who is what he is to me, should have failed you. And I do not see anything which can free me of that chagrin except to hear that God has caused him to drown, and that on account of all his wickedness I may not be removed from your good favor; to which very humbly I recommend myself, praying Our Lord to give you a very good and long life and good success in your affairs.

Your very humble and very obedient wife,
"Caterine." [1]

This affair evidently troubled Catherine very much both as a wife and as a cousin. She wrote another similar letter to the King about her favorite cousin Piero and she wrote three letters to the Constable about the matter. She tried to get the Constable to ask the King to let Leone come to Court and plead in his own defense, because she has lain awake night after night, tormented with the thought of what has happened and afraid that Leone, driven to despair, will add to the crime of his desertion by taking service with the King's enemies, which would be a last blow she could not bear. "So far as I am concerned, my gossip,

[1] Letts. I, 45.

you know with what affection I love the King and his service; . . . and if I thought that the King would take this evilly, I should rather be dead than to ask him for it, . . . Therefore I pray you to talk to him about it . . . and to tell me when I shall have the good luck to see the King." [1]

Two letters of Leone, written one to his brother and the other to a reverend friend to excuse himself, give a striking self-drawn picture of unspeakable pride, contempt for law and reckless violence in vengeance; the passions which had been bred to such an undiluted strain in the factional politics of the Italian cities. He says this trouble has come to him because of the desire of the Constable to put some insult upon him; a desire of which he has known a long time. "As to what you tell me that many blame me for the death of Corso, I answer that it isn't a thing worth talking about, that I thought he was a traitor to me and I punished him deservedly more quickly than I would have wished, because those who were engaged with him in the crime of this betrayal wanted to take him out of my hands by force." . . . "I took the position that there was no need to get such a fellow before other judges." He then expatiates again and again upon the idea that the real object of the judicial action against him was to investigate his personal affairs, "which are nobody's business but his own." [2] Two years later Leone Strozzi made his peace with the King and was restored to the royal service as general of galleys in the waters of Italy.

It would be a mistake to assume that the affection for her husband expressed in these letters was in any sense feigned. In exchange for a small part of her husband's heart Catherine gave him all hers. Her letters show also that she was a most careful and loving mother. Of the hundred and fifty odd letters which have survived from the first six years when she was queen, twenty-five were written to d'Humières or his wife. D'Humières was perhaps the

[1] Letts. I, 46.
[2] Principi, I, 107.

leading noble of Picardy, a chevalier of the order of St. Michel who had served as lieutenant general of the King in Dauphiny, Saxony and Piedmont. He had been chosen just before the death of Francis I as the governor of Catherine's children and they were continued under his charge. These letters of Catherine to him show a constant solicitude for her children. The Queen begs the Governor or his wife to send her news as often as possible, for it is the greatest pleasure she has to hear of her children. She gives careful directions about their health and wants them no longer lodged in the château but in the pavilion, because the château is too near the water. When her little girl Claude is ill, she writes that she and the King both think that the child ought to be given bread soaked in water and not bouillon, because it would be better and more nourishing for her. She repeatedly asked to have her children's pictures painted and sent to her, and she insists one time that the painter shall paint the side of the face which he does not usually paint, in order that she may see how they look from that side.

The King shared this solicitude for his children, and the Constable joined his friend in watching over them, writing regular letters about them to his cousin, D'Humières. He helped to choose nurses and doctors. As he was the father of eleven children, he was able to write with authority about what to do when they had the measles. He charges them to take great care that the little Dauphin who was beginning to be afflicted already with the trouble in his ear which finally killed him, should not go out in cold weather. When they are traveling or about to travel, he provided horses and coaches and litters. He even sent down his wife's dressmaker to make corsages for the little princess. In short, he played to perfection the combined part of grandfather and bachelor uncle. This solicitude for the children on the part of the parents and the old family friend was shared to the fullest extent by the mistress. Diana carried on a constant correspondence with D'Hum-

ières and his wife, signing herself "Your perfect good ally and friend," in which she gives the most minute directions about their care.

Of Catherine's remaining letters of this period, a dozen are to the Duke of Guise or his wife, twenty odd to the Constable or his wife, seven to the Cardinal of Bourbon and seven to her husband. Seventy-five were written to Italians, the bulk of them to the Duke and Duchess of Florence. Of these Italian letters, about one-fifth are letters of friendship or compliment; the other four-fifths seek some favor for Catherine's friends or adherents. Some of them may be of the sort described later (1560) to her daughter the Queen of Spain. "My daughter, I am often importuned to write on behalf of people I don't know who want positions in your household, and I can't always refuse because of my relations to those who speak to me about it. I drop you this line to say that whenever you receive such letters from me, unless they are written in my own hand, don't pay any attention to them and do just as you would have done if I had not written." [1]

Catherine's great personal tact, her devotion to her husband and her children were not without their reward. In the middle of the reign the Venetian Ambassador wrote of her, "The modesty of Her Majesty the Queen is very praiseworthy. She is a young woman of thirty-five years but not very pretty. She has the big eyes and the thick lips of the Medici, and resembles very much her great uncle, Pope Leo. She loves the King her husband as much as can be imagined. She dresses rather severely and modestly. She is a good Catholic and very religious and when the King is in camp she dresses in black and in mourning and has her court do the same and exhorts every one to make the most devoted prayers, praying the Lord God for the happiness and the prosperity of the absent King." [2]

Four years later another ambassador reported of her

[1] Neg. Fr. II, p. 499.
[2] Rel. I, 2, p. 286.

as follows: "The Queen has born ten children in thirteen years. She has a very broad face, is of an excessively kind nature and tries to please everyone and especially the Italians as much as is possible, and she is so much loved, not only by all the court but by all the kingdom, that it is almost incredible. She loves the King above every other thing, so much so that the object of all her thoughts seems to be nothing else than how to please his Majesty and to be with him. For this reason, without having any regard either to the labor or to any sort of fatigue, she follows him always wherever she can. This love is returned by the King, His Majesty having always given her not only all the honors and demonstrations of respect which are fitting for a queen, but also always made her the sharer of all his secrets. She loves very much Marshal Strozzi, who is her cousin, and she has favored him always as much as has been possible." [1]

Scarcely was the new King seated upon the throne before he found himself urged toward a new war both by his patriotic ambition and his friendships. He had a very strong desire to recover for France her two ports which England held, Calais and Boulogne. In addition his young favorite, the Duke of Aumale, wanted to turn the French arms toward Scotland, where his sister, Mary of Guise, the widow of James V, was ruling in the name of her little daughter, Mary Queen of Scots. It had been a plan of Henry VIII, inherited from his father, to unite Scotland and England. The council he had chosen before his death to rule England in the name of his little son, Edward VI, hoped to carry out that plan by marrying the young prince to the little Queen. The French heiress preferred a French alliance and independence and France was of course anxious to encourage this preference. From the very beginning of Henry's reign, therefore, a stream of French troops poured into Scotland, though it was not until the middle of 1549 that war was actually declared. Meantime, to avoid all

[1] Rel. I, 2, p. 430.

danger of her being carried off to England, the six year old queen was brought back to France, where she became the comrade and companion of the royal children. She was already engaged to be married to Francis, the little Dauphin, and the King wrote that she must always precede the other children as the future Queen of France, and one who was already "a crowned Queen." The parents were delighted to hear that the boy, who was six weeks younger, gave a most friendly reception to his little fiancée. A little later the Venetian Ambassador wrote: "The Dauphin loves her Most Serene Highness, the little Queen of Scotland, very much. She is a very pretty little girl. Sometimes it happens that, with their arms around each other, they go away into a corner of the apartments so that no one can hear their childish secrets." [1]

The little Queen of Scots brought trouble in her train. She had a Scotch governess, Lady Fleming, "a very pretty little woman," who found favor in the eyes of the King. The Constable encouraged the affair in the hope of breaking the influence of Diana. The thing reached a pass where the scandal could no longer be concealed, the wife and mistress united to drive the woman from court in disgrace and the mistress turned in fury on the Constable, who soon succeeded in making his peace with the Queen apparently on the plea that his plot had been directed against Diana and not against her.[2]

The war with England did not long continue after the child whose hand was its prize was safe in France. It was ended by the peace of 1550, which surrendered Boulogne to France.[3]

[1] Baschet ctd., 486.
[2] Baschet ctd., 440.
[3] Rymer, VI, 182.

CHAPTER V

THE FIRST TASTE OF REAL POWER

The success of this war only whetted the young King's appetite for more. Ever since as a little boy he had been kept in Spain as a hostage for the fulfilment of his father's treaty, he had cherished a deep hatred for Charles V, nor was it "possible to wish so much evil to any enemy as he always wishes for him. This infirmity is so natural that no doctor will ever cure him of it except the death or ruin of his enemy." [1] He saw now a chance for a partial vengeance. Just before Henry had acceded to the throne, the Emperor Charles V had defeated the Protestant princes of Germany at the Battle of Mühlberg and still kept their two leaders in close captivity. In face of the suppression of their religion and their independent authority by this too powerful master, they turned to Henry II for help. Devoted and orthodox Catholic as he was, he did not hesitate to league with them; even as his father had leagued with the Turk against the great enemy of their house. In the beginning of 1552 a treaty was formed between a number of the German states and the King of France. He promised them subsidies and in return they surrendered to him the cities of Metz, Toul and Verdun, which he was to hold as vicar of the empire. "This renewal of the ancient friendship between the Germans and the Gauls which had once made them masters of Hungary, Transylvania, Bohemia, Poland, Denmark and of all Italy, was intended to defend the state of Germany against the Emperor Charles V, who by his tyrannical exaction has made himself formidable to all the Empire." [2]

[1] Rel. I, 2, p. 286.
[2] Rel. I, 2, p. 286, Rabutin 404, De Thou II, 80.

While the armies were getting ready to open hostilities, Catherine, who was traveling to be near her husband, was taken seriously ill at Joinville with the purples, a terrifying epidemic disease whose most marked symptom was an eruption of red patches all over the body. Her tongue swelled so much that she could no longer speak, and it was thought at one time that she was dead. The sad news was already spread abroad and almost all her household had abandoned her except "the Cardinal of Châtillon, who on account of the sincere and respectful affection which he had for the Queen, remained beside her bed with Diana of Poitiers, who was much concerned for the life of that princess because the King might grow cold towards her if he married another woman. In the end, bleeding of the tongue restored the Queen's power of speaking, but the King remained in the city until she was entirely well." [1]

Before he left Paris he had assembled the Parlement, which was the chief court of his kingdom, to explain his policy and what he proposed to do in Germany. He declared that he left the regency to the Queen, and Catherine thus got her first taste of handling large affairs. She took her duties very seriously, as the following extracts from her letters show:

"To the Cardinal of Bourbon:
"My Cousin:

"I am informed that at Paris there are certain preachers who have nothing else to do but talk of matters of state to rouse the people to mutiny; against whom we ought to guard ourselves more carefully than against fire and pestilence and among others two especially. One is a Cordelier who preached in Notre Dame a sermon tending toward sedition, expressing discontent with the undertaking of the King and even of his alliance with the German princes and the aid he is giving them; . . . which words are a sufficient proof of the arrogance of such preachers who put their own judgment above the prudence, goodness and religion of their King and his council. The other is a Jacobin who preached at St. Paul's on the text, 'The leaders of the priests made a council

[1] De Thou II, 60, Rabutin 406, Guiffret 97.

against Jesus,' saying it was not according to the counsel of God to grant the King a tax of twenty francs a steeple to be levied on the buildings and jewels of the churches . . . and not the way to perpetuate his title of 'the Most Christian King.' You understand how easy it is for a people under such pretense of zeal and devotion to be roused to tumult; which is easier to stop at the beginning than afterward. Therefore I have written you immediately, as soon as I was informed, waiting only to confer with the Admiral and others left here by the King near me, begging you, as affectionately as I can, to consult at once with the gentlemen of the council established there and to take prompt action. None could be better than to arrest secretly the said preachers without any public scandal and put them in a safe place until the King can send word what he wants done."

The Queen goes on to say that other preachers should be trained to refute these attacks by setting "skilfully" before the people arguments in defense of the King's course, which the letter suggests in some detail. Eleven days later the Cardinal answered that the offending Cordelier had publicly revoked his sermon in Notre Dame. The Jacobin had fled the city, and the archers were hard on his heels with orders to follow him if need be to his convent at Orleans.[1]

"10th of June, 1552.

"To the King:

"Monseigneur:

"Fumel has arrived here according to your orders. . . . We didn't want to keep him, but before he started back I wanted him to appear in your council where he could hear an account of the diligence we have displayed in the matter of furnishing your provisions. . . . We arranged yesterday another bargain for twenty thousand loaves of bread a day, at the same time informing you, Monseigneur, that all those who have arrived these last days from your camp, say they have met a large number of wagons carrying bread, flour, and wine, not only men in the state service, but also volunteer merchants, and I hope that, by the order which we have given to this matter, to the very best of our ability, you will have reason to be contented; for now everybody in the company is attending to business and they could not, it seems to me, do better than they are now doing."[2]

[1] Letts. I, 50.
[2] Letts. I, 558.

The zeal with which the Queen threw herself into her new function of Commissary General of the army, is again suggested by the following letter:

"20th of May, 1552.

"To my Gossip, Mons. the Constable:

"My Gossip:

"You will see by the letter which I am writing to the King that I have not lost any time in learning the office and duties of a commissary of provisions, in which, if everybody does his duty and carries out and fulfills what he has promised, I assure you that I shall soon become prime mistress, for from one hour to another I don't study anything but that. I am impressing and importuning everyone and I will not spare any trouble until I know that the King and you are content."[1]

That Catherine was less successful in this new office of Commissary General than she hoped to be, and that her lack of experience caused her to make some elementary blunders, is suggested by the following letter, written like the others at Châlons, where she had taken up her residence because it was the base of supplies for the army.

"17th of June 1552.

"To my Gossip, Mons. the Constable:

"My Gossip:

"I got your letter yesterday very late by which you inform me that if Bourran, Pelocquin, Pioche and the Receiver de Vigny, do what they promise, you would have enough provisions without the addition of the bargain which has lately been made with Jean Prevost. I advise you, my gossip, that we made the contract on account of the fear which we have had that the King might lack provisions. . . . Nevertheless some honest expedient will be found to get out of the affair and break the contract with the said Prevost. . . . In addition, my gossip, I found it exceedingly strange, that of all the horses and carts which have carried provisions, not a single one has arrived at the camp. And I cannot imagine where the said provisions could have been carried. As for understanding where the failure is, you must see, my gossip, that it can be much better discovered at camp where the said provisions have been carried, than it can be here. It

[1] Letts. I, 56.

seems to me that Bourran is wrong in having said to Blesneau that he hasn't seen any provisions where he is, because we have received several letters from him making mention of the fact that the said provisions have been brought there; which, as you know, could not fly away. Nevertheless, my gossip, following your advice I shall give orders that, from now on, the said provisions shall be transported in the charge of people who will be responsible for them and who will put them in the hands of the commissaries of provisions who are there; from whom they will demand a receipt. . . .

"My gossip, I thank you very much for the news you give me of the excellent health of the King and also that the migraine which he had didn't last very long. I beg you to do me the kindness to continue to send me news."[1]

The health of the King did not remain good. He shared all the hardships of the campaign, even sleeping in the trenches with the soldiers. The heat was extreme and some of the marches forced. Like a number of his captains he became ill and was obliged to retire from the front for rest at the city of Sedan. Catherine at once moved forward from Châlons to Sedan and stayed with her husband to take care of him until he was able to rejoin the army. She did not have much time to learn her job of commissary general for, in the middle of the summer, at the end of a campaign which added to France the cities of Metz, Toul and Verdun, Henry, after watering the horses of his army in the Rhine as a symbol of triumph, dismissed a part of it and divided the rest into garrisons.[2]

The Emperor Charles V did not delay in making his counterstroke. He released the two Protestant electors from prison and made peace with the German princes. Then he assembled a large army and advanced in the month of August to retake the city of Metz. But after four months' siege, his army was suffering so from disease and bad weather that he was obliged to retreat. It was reported that of sixty thousand men with which he began the siege,

[1] Letts. X, 8.
[2] De Thou II, 74, Rabutin 426, Brant. III, 267.

only twelve thousand finally succeeded in finishing their retreat. These figures are doubtless exaggerated; but certain it is that the condition of the retreating army was most miserable. "The soldiers were in such great misery and poverty that I cannot doubt that the animals themselves, even the most cruel, would have had some pity for these miserable soldiers crawling, staggering along the roads in utter want, often dying beside the hedges or at the edge of the thickets to become food for dogs and birds of prey."

Relieved of her labors as regent of the kingdom,[1] labors which had included interviewing ambassadors, writing to the Parlement at Paris, advising municipalities and many other things, Catherine occupied herself with the care of her children, as the following letter shows:

"To my Gossip, Mons. the Constable:
"My Gossip:

"Mons. Nicolo Allamanni being about to start toward the King and you, has begged me to give him a letter of recommendation, which I am very willing to do, and I beg you to be willing to listen to what he has to say to you. So far as news about me is concerned, I arrived Wednesday in the evening at this place where I have found Madame [the King's sister Margarite] very happy and growing stout, and my little daughter so well that, although she has grown quite thin and a little feeble, you would say to look at her face and to hear her speak that she hadn't been sick at all. I won't write a longer letter after recommending myself to you and praying God to give you what you desire.

"Your good gossip and friend,
"Caterine."

Her most intimate friends seem to have been the Duchess of Montmorency (wife of the Constable) and the young Duchess of Guise, daughter of the Duke of Ferrara and granddaughter of Louis XII of France. She evidently wrote to them frequently, pleasant friendly letters, and she was apparently anxious not to show more attention to one than to the other. For it can hardly be accidental that she generally wrote to both of them on the same day or within

[1] Rabutin, 405.

a couple of days. Some of these letters are mere notes asking for news, others are inquiries about the health of a member of the family who is ill, some of them enclose letters which have come from the front, or news which has arrived from the King or their husbands. Some of them simply express affection, as for instance this phrase in a letter to the Duchess of Montmorency, "I wish you were here and if you were I would take pains to keep you here. Send me word I pray you when you are going to come." [1] Or this to the Duchess of Guise:

"My Cousin:

"I was the angriest woman in the world to hear that you still will not come. I wish you had at least passed through here, because I have great fear of not seeing you for a long time. I beg you to send me the real word as to when I shall have that pleasure. Meanwhile at least I hope that you will often send me news of yourself." [2]

She was particularly anxious about the health of her friends, as this letter to the Duchess of Guise shows:

"My Cousin:

"I send you this lackey to know how you are and I beg you that although you do not feel any more sickness, you will not on that account stop taking care of yourself. Don't go out too soon for this year the measles are very dangerous, if one doesn't take care of oneself and doesn't take medicine at the end. You have seen it by the case of my son who didn't take any and who died of it, and his sister is cured since she has taken it and without that they sent me word that she would have been in great danger. Therefore I beg you to think well about this and don't fail to take medicine before you leave your room." [3]

This solicitude about her sick relatives and friends, together with an unmistakable liking for playing the part of the family physician, remained characteristic of Catherine even up to the end of her life.

[1] Letts. I, 76.
[2] Letts. I, 82.
[3] Letts. I, 39.

But after all, neither the health of her children nor of her friends ever gave the Queen so much concern as to be without news of her husband. During one of his absences for military reasons, she wrote to the Constable the following letter:

"My Gossip:

"I saw last night what you wrote me about my sickness, but I must tell you that it was not the water which made me sick, but not having any news of the King; for I think that he and you and all the rest don't think any more that I am alive. Just be sure that there is nothing in the world that can do me so much harm as to think that I have lost his good grace or that he forgets me. Therefore, my gossip, if you want me to live and to be well, write to me as often as you can and send me repeatedly news of him. That is the best régime for my health which I can have. Gossip, everybody tells me that I should go to Mezières, but I don't dare to do it because I have no commandment from the King. If it's true that he wants me to do it, make him send me word and I will put this down on the list with all the many other things that you have done for me. I recommend myself to your good grace.

"Your good gossip and friend, Caterine." [1]

The successful defense of Metz, heroically held by the Duke of Guise, and the disastrous retreat of the Imperial army, were the last striking events of the war. It lingered along, inflicting terrible suffering upon the people of the border, but without coming to any decisive action. Armies of fifty to sixty thousand men (which were considered huge in those days) were raised on both sides, but they seemed unwilling to put it to the hazard of a battle. The Emperor was crippled with gout and worn out by the terrible labors which he had endured for years. He longed for rest and he had made up his mind to divide his power between his brother and his son, to resign all his crowns and to retire to a monastery to prepare for death. On the other hand, Henry II was steadily forced toward peace by the great financial exhaustion of the kingdom. Francis I had, indeed,

[1] Letts. I, 66.

left some cash in the treasury, but the long years of war and the enormous expenses of his court had made taxes very high. Henry II was an exceedingly bad manager of state funds. The great contemporary publicist, Bodin, wrote in his *Republic:* "Francis I did not give away as much money in his reign of thirty-two years as his successor in two years." . . . "There was an ordinance of Francis I confirmed by his successor which provided that there should be four keys of the great chest of the treasury, of which the King should keep one and the others should be in the hands of commissaries appointed by him and that all distributions of money should take place by the commandment of the King, in the presence of the treasurer and the comptroller of the treasury. But King Henry discharged these commissaries and officers of the treasury in order not to be obliged in the future to render accounts to them." In consequence of the expenses of war and his wasteful habits, Henry had been obliged, quite early in his reign, to raise the rate of interest and he paid on loans from twelve to sixteen per cent.[1] There was nothing for it now but to increase taxes and the people were already staggering under the burden of taxation.

Besides this constant pressure of poverty, there was another influence which worked very strongly for peace in the King's mind, and that was the Constable, who had always been for reconciliation with the Hapsburgs. In spite of all the opposition of the Guise, he succeeded in persuading the King to offer peace and the Truce of Vaucelles was signed in February, 1556. It suspended all warlike operations for five years. The French were to keep all that they had gained during the war, which gave them Boulogne, Metz, Toul, Verdun and many places in Luxemburg, Flanders and Hainault, in addition to the portions of Corsica which they had occupied, and many places in Tuscany and central Italy which they had taken. If the Truce could have been made permanent, it would have been an

[1] Bodin, VI. Ch. 2, p. 904.

ending to the long war between Hapsburg and Valois, decidedly in favor of France. As a reward to the Constable, who had not only counselled but arranged this peace, Diana of France, illegitimate daughter of the King and an Italian woman, was to be married to the Constable's eldest son, Francis. Catherine never showed any animosity towards her husband's bastards. She and the Duchess of Montmorency always remained on the best of terms and it was Diana de Montmorency who, in her old age, finally carried out the last wishes of Catherine by bringing her body back from Blois and burying it in the tomb at St. Denis which Catherine had built for herself and her husband.

Well might Ronsard sing over the Truce of Vaucelles:

"Thou hast destroyed the troubles
Of harmful war.
Flashing on us the splendour
Of thy victorious graces.
Instead of the harsh iron,
Threats and flames,
Thou bringest to us sports,
Dance and the love of women;
Labours dear and pleasant,
To young and ardent years.
Oh great King without an equal,
Thou givest us this gift
Because of Montmorency
And his faithful counsel."[1]

But the peace the poet sang with such joy was threatened, even before it was made, by a secret treaty negotiated by the Constable's great rivals of the House of Lorraine, and it was very fleeting.

Some time in 1556 Catherine wrote to the Duke of Ferrara:

"My Uncle:

"I will not tell you of the pleasure which I have received from having heard through your ambassador that things are as I have

[1] Ronsard II, 35.

wanted them for so long a time to be and to see the good resolutions which the King has taken to send [to Italy] Mons. de Guise so well accompanied as he is, which makes me hope that, with the help of God and with your help, I shall see the King in the position where I have so long hoped to see him and that your greatness will be increased with his. . . .

"Your good niece, CATERINE."[1]

This letter marks a change of policy on the part of the French crown which was the result of a long struggle between the two factions of the French court. In this struggle Catherine evidently abandoned her habitual colorless attitude of humble submission to whatever her husband decided to do, and took a strong stand in urging him to action. She emerged very decidedly from her carefully maintained neutrality and friendliness with both sides in the jealousies of the Montmorency-Guise factions and threw all her influence against her old friend the Constable and in favor of her more recent friends, the Guise, and their great ally, her husband's mistress.

It is not difficult to guess why she did this. The question concerned Italy and Italy was from the beginning the one sphere where she had continuously tried to use political influence. The stream of correspondence regarding patronage which we have seen beginning when she was a bride, had never ceased to flow. As she says in her letter to the Duke of Ferrara, she had always wanted her husband to be master in Italy. This ambition of the new King and Queen, looking toward Italy, had been clearly recognized by the Spanish Ambassador at the beginning of Henry's reign. He wrote: "It is reported that the new Queen Catherine begged the Tuscan Ambassador to urge his master to come to terms with the King. The Queen pointed out that when the Emperor died there would be less stability in Italy so that the Duke would need the help of the King of France whom he would find a good and faithful ally." The Ambassador replied his master would reject these pro-

[1] Arch. Mod., Endorsed 1556.

posals because his entire devotion was toward the Emperor. "It has been thought good to give this information to show the ardent desire of the French King and his friends to get the lordship of Italy and to stir up trouble there if they get the chance." [1]

It was this ambition which led Catherine's husband to stake his newly won advantage on a risky venture. The Truce of Vaucelles had marked a triumph of the House of Valois over Charles V, the apparently overmastering adversary who was Emperor of Germany and King of Spain. To break this truce rather than to turn it into a permanent peace was not wise. For Henry II to shift the bulk of his forces from the north where he had been so successful, and where he fought close to his base, while the Spanish King had to fight far from his, and to send an army to the south of Italy in the hope of making a conquest hundreds of miles from his own borders, seems now like the act of folly it was. But it must be remembered that it was the favorite folly of three of his predecessors upon the throne to waste the resources of France in a vain attempt to make good their claim upon the Duchy of Milan and the Kingdom of Naples,[2] and that the change in Henry's military strategy was urged upon him with vehemence by the general whose exploits in the field had done so much to force the brilliantly successful Truce of Vaucelles.

For if the Constable was the hero of peace, the Duke of Guise was the hero of the war. In the last campaign the Constable had done little with the great armies he led and the Duke's successful defense of Metz had been the turning point in the struggle. He was very anxious to renew the war for several reasons. First, because he was the ablest of the French generals; second, because the Constable and his faction at court were thoroughly in favor of peace; third, because he had connections and ambitions in Italy; fourth,

[1] Cal. Span. 1547-1549, p. 211.
[2] See Note.

because his brother had just made a league there which must be repudiated if the Truce of Vaucelles stood.

The complicated situation in Italy which brought about this league needs a few words of explanation to show how the life of Catherine was affected by it.

Pope Julius III died in the spring of 1555. In the Conclave the Cardinal of Ferrara, the uncle of the wife of the Duke of Guise, became one of the leading candidates for the vacant papal throne. Henry II had ordered the French cardinals to support the Cardinal of Ferrara as if he were his own brother, and he authorized them to offer to the other cardinals who might be willing to support them in voting for Ferrara, benefices in the French church to the value of twenty-five thousand écus annually. The King of Spain likewise sent the leader of his party among the cardinals 20,000 scudi as election funds. That maintaining good connections by the distribution of patronage among the cardinals was a regular policy of the French court is shown by the following instructions from Catherine to her agent in Rome, the Count of Tournon:

"The King is much pleased to hear of the good will of Cardinal Vitelli . . . to whom he can promise all the favour to be hoped from a great King with large means of showing his gratitude to his good servitors as a proof of which the King sends him the procuration of the bishopric of Carcasonne, which is 'a fine piece.' Give to the Cardinal of Altaemps the King's letter accompanied by the most agreeable language you can invent to make him understand that he has offered his services to a King recognized by everyone as the least ungrateful to his servitors of any monarch in the world which in time the Cardinal will plainly see at the first opportunity of doing something for him. So far as the Cardinal Ursini is concerned the King is very glad to be assured of his good will to do him service, which will be always recognized but just at the present time there is 'no piece of Marque' available. As for getting the Cardinal of Ferrara to transfer to him the Archbishopric of Narbonne (as has been suggested) 'it is too large a piece.' It would be enough if the Cardinal of Ferrara could accommodate him with one of his abbeys of the value of five or six thousand livres, with the

assurance that the King will pay Ferrara back with the first vacant bishopric or abbey of an equal or greater value." 'So far as three other named cardinals are concerned, the envoy is directed to say that the King cannot accommodate them at the moment by any of the means suggested, but to assure them that the King will not forget them although he is forced by necessity to wait until the means of expressing his good will present themselves.' [1]

But patronage had no weight in the electoral conference of 1555. The situation of the Church, threatened by the growth of Protestantism, was so grave and the desire to reform ecclesiastical abuses, complained of not only by the Protestants but by the most loyal Catholics, had grown so strong, that the motives which had ruled so often in elections were driven into the background and yielded to ideas more honest and more holy.

What ideals had been prevalent in previous electing conclaves are fairly explained in the report of the Venetian Ambassador to the Senate in the year 1560:

"In regard to the method and the incidents which arise in the election of a pope I have written so much a few months before, that I think it almost superfluous to speak of it any more. Nevertheless, I will say that the, under these circumstances, not too sacred Holy College of Cardinals is directed and governed in all things, so far as human judgment can form any decision, by the will of princes and by the particular personal interests of the cardinals. I have never heard it said 'such and such a cardinal will be pope because he is a man of doctrine, of religion and of good character,' but very often 'such a man will not be pope because he is too scrupulous in religion and an enemy of vices' because a large part of the cardinals want to have a good-fellow for pope. Every day I have heard it said 'such and such a cardinal will be, or will not be, pope because he is nominated, recommended or excluded by France or by Spain and because he is either the friend or the enemy of such and such a cardinal or of the chief of some faction.' . . . I say this because, besides the fact that some of the cardinals are the subjects of the said princes, which makes them obedient to them, almost all the

[1] Arch. Mod., qtd. Romier (1), II, 3; Ribier II, 605; Arch. Simancas, 809 f. 51, qtd. Riess B. N. Nouvs. Acqs. 6001 f. 44.

cardinals are under obligation to one of these two kings, either because they hold abbeys of them or other beneficences, or because they are in receipt of large pensions. Therefore they are afraid that, if they do not obey the will of these kings, they will be deprived of what they have; or they hope, on the other hand, agreeing to their wishes, to receive from them still greater emoluments than those which they possess." [1]

The election of a pope (Marcellus II) without any political connections, with the highest reputation for holy living, ability and sincere religion, was an agreeable surprise to honest churchmen who, like this ambassador, knew what had often happened in many previous papal elections. Queen Catherine and the Constable had additional reasons for rejoicing over it. A correspondent of the Duke of Parma wrote to him that they were glad because of "the hate they bear to the defeated Cardinal of Ferrara," [2] who was the uncle of the Duchess of Guise.

But the holy Marcellus II lived only three weeks and after a short and stormy conclave, Cardinal Caraffa was elected and took the name of Paul IV. Henry II was not too much displeased, because the name of Cardinal Caraffa had been on the list of the three men for whom his adherents might vote in case the election of the Cardinal of Ferrara was impossible. The new Pope was a man of seventy-nine years, with a great reputation for learning. He had always been most rigorous in the use of the Inquisition against heretics. His private life was stainless. The old man soon made it apparent that besides his desire to reform the church and repress heretics he had two very strong passions: first, a desire to secure a great deal of wealth and power for his nephews, and second, a hatred of Spaniards, resulting in an eager desire to destroy their dominance in Italy. This latter passion was intense and the old Pope could scarcely find words to express it. He told the Venetian Ambassador that the Imperialists were "rogues, children of the devil

[1] Rel. II, 4, p. 43, Comp. ib. 3, p. 371.
[2] Arch. Nap., qtd. Romier II, 3.

and of iniquity." The agent in carrying out his political policy was his younger nephew, Carlo Caraffa, whose life up to this time had been spent as a soldier of fortune; a profession in which he had gained neither much wealth nor great reputation. The man was a typical Italian condottiere, a free liver of moderate abilities, violent passions, unlimited egotism and great greed, but many both of the Spanish and French cardinals, anxious to curry favor with the Pope's nephew, urged Paul IV to carry out his intention of appointing Carlo a cardinal.[1]

In October, 1555, three months before the Truce of Vaucelles, this aged Pope, whose dominant motives were zeal for orthodoxy and reform, nepotism and hate of the Spaniards, had signed the draft of a proposed league between the King of France, the Duke of Ferrara and the Papacy. The allies were to create an army and a war chest of five hundred thousand scudi. The army was to be made up of ten thousand French troops and ten thousand Papal troops and commanded by the Duke of Ferrara. The King was to contribute seven tenths of the contents of the war chest and the Pope the rest. The objects of this league and armament were to drive the Duke of Florence from his city and restore the Republican exiles; to add Siena to the Papal States or to give it as a fief of the Papacy to some lord whom the inhabitants would choose; to conquer the Kingdom of Naples and grant it as a fief to one of the younger sons of the King of France; to make another one of the younger sons of the King of France Duke of Milan, to cut out of the territory of the Kingdom of Naples two independent states to be given to nephews of the Pope. The King was delighted with this suggestion and, in spite of the opposition of the Constable, he sent the Cardinal of Lorraine and the Cardinal of Tournon to Rome to complete the league. It was modified and signed by them in the name of the King of France on the 15th of December, 1555. So eager was

[1] Rel. II, 3, p. 379. Cal. Ven., 11 Dec. 1556.

the old Pope in this matter that he copied out with his own hand the clean draft of the treaty which was to be sent to France. So that while the Constable was arranging for peace in the north: in the south his rival the Cardinal of Lorraine had arranged for war against Spain with a joint Papal and French army which was to be commanded by the Duke of Ferrara.[1]

But when the triumphant Cardinal got back to Paris, he learned that, three days before his arrival, his great adversary the Constable had arranged the Truce of Vaucelles. He cried out in anger, as the Ambassador of the Duke of Ferrara reported to his master, "the game is lost." The old Pope, when he heard the news, also broke out in wrath. But Cardinal Carlo Caraffa did not give up the game yet. He finally started for France as Legate with the ostensible mission of arranging a general permanent peace in Europe, but really to arrange for the invasion of Italy by a French army attacking Spain. The secret was, however, already known to his enemies. The Spanish agent in Paris wrote on the 8th of June, 1556, that the King was holding continual councils on the question whether they shall make a permanent peace, maintain the Truce, or renew the war. He adds: "They find it very difficult to decide for several reasons: first, the Constable is in no sort of agreement with the House of Guise, . . . the Guise trying to break the Truce which the Constable had arranged without them . . . in order not to leave to the Constable so much authority and reputation; second, the solicitation of the Cardinal Caraffa, who is coming to advise against peace. . . . Item, Italian fugitives who beg them to continue the war. . . . Item, the Protestant princes of Germany are persuading the King that if he continues the war they will back him." It shows how little the influence of Catherine at court had been counted by shrewd observers up to this time that the Spanish agent does not even men-

[1] Ancel Riess 61, Romier (1), II, 30. Cal. Ven. VI, 343.

tion her as one of those who were urging the King towards war.[1]

Cardinal Caraffa arrived at the French court about the middle of June, bringing from the Pope the usual gifts; for the King a blessed sword and a golden rose for Catherine, who had already entered into correspondence with him in her usual way by asking favors for her friends. He had not only granted the favors, but written a letter thanking her for defending him against the calumnies of people who would rather express their malignity than serve the King. The Pope regarded her with especial favor, for the Venetian Ambassador wrote to the Senate that he heard him say: "The Queen of France is a little saint. She will give us another little boy whom we will make a cardinal and thus interest the King of France even more in the Holy See." [2]

Caraffa could not add enough weight to the advice of the Guise to make it prevail, but for some reason not clear, Charles V, fully aware of this strife in the French royal council, decided to strike first at his implacable enemy in the papal chair. In September, 1556, a week before Caraffa got back to Rome, after an unsuccessful mission, the Duke of Alva invaded the papal states at the head of a Spanish army.[3]

Even this news did not at once destroy the Constable's firm control of French policy. Henry II sent word to Rome that "they must try to make peace as nothing more will be done" (by France). The Guise-Diana-Queen combination were not, however, discouraged. They renewed the struggle to get the ear of the King, and Catherine for the first time threw whatever influence she had with her husband definitely and strongly in favor of a disputed policy of state. By the middle of the summer war was decided on amid the general enthusiasm of the courtiers; for the French nobles

[1] Decrue (2), 189; Arch. Mod. qtd. Romier II, 43; Duruy 108, ctd. Granvelle (1), IV, 594.

[2] Duruy 155 N. Bib. Casantense, pntd. Duruy App. 381, Cal. Ven. 12 Feb. 1557.

[3] Ancel corrects Duruy.

at court were never averse to fighting; which meant to them adventure, largess and the chance of promotion. Only the Constable protested, saying, "We shall all ride across the Alps, but come back on foot." [1]

The Venetian Ambassador was much better informed than the Spaniard about Catherine's activity in this struggle over state policy between the two great factions at the French court. He wrote: "Before this resolve was formed by the King there were great disputes between the Constable and the Duke of Guise. The Constable and his friends, backed by general public feeling, have done their utmost to prevent ratification of the league with the Pope. The Duke of Guise was in favor of the league and strongly supported by the Queen and her dependents because of the affairs of Tuscany (Florence) and by Mme. de Valentinois and her dependents because of her connection with the Guise." This opposition of her old friend did not make Catherine any less keen for war because just at this crisis she was put out with him over a distinctly personal matter. The Spanish Ambassador writes: "Between the Queen and the Constable there is ill feeling on account of the marriage of Montmorency." The story is so filled with the color and atmosphere of the times that it is worth telling in some detail.[2]

Mademoiselle de Piennes was one of the Queen's maids of honor: a young woman of noble family about twenty years old, "as beautiful, honest and accomplished as any in France." Francis de Montmorency, the oldest son of the Constable, now twenty-six years old, had known her since she was a little girl and had been in love with her for years. Before he went to the war, when she was sixteen, they were secretly engaged to be married, and on his return from captivity (he had surrendered with the garrison of Terouanne) he had solemnly renewed that engagement in the

[1] Ribier II, 657, Ancel I, 2, pp. 464, 476, 496; Cal. Vcn., 19 Sept. 1556, Pasquier (2), Bk. IV, 1.
[2] Cal. Vcn., 12 Jan., 1 Feb., 1556. Arch. Belg. qtd. Romier II, 102.

Abbey Church of Vauluisant. His father, who knew nothing of all this, had planned for him a great future. He was to marry Diana, illegitimate daughter of the King, widow of the Duke of Castro. Her father was to give her as dowry two counties and 100,000 livres, give her husband the collar of the order of St. Michel and make him governor of Paris and the Isle de France. When Francis heard of this plan, he was afraid to tell his father about his sweetheart and finally got his cousin Coligny, now admiral of France, to tell the King. The King dropped a hint to the Constable, with whom he was dining, and the next morning the Constable got the secret out of Coligny. He fell first into rage and then into melancholy so deep that he would not leave his house for two weeks.[1]

Catherine took up warmly the cause of her pretty maid of honor. But the Queen's protection did not do the poor girl much good. She was called before a tribunal of four bishops and two lawyers, who shut her up in a convent. Meantime Francis was sent to Rome to get released from his promise by the Pope. Thence he wrote her a letter saying that he was sorry to have offended God, the King and his parents and had asked pardon of the Pope, who put him in his earlier liberty, therefore he gave up all the promises of marriage which had passed between them, freed her from them and begged her to do the same to him. This letter was read to her by a royal commission of five. With tears in her eyes she said, "I see very well that M. de Montmorency would rather be a rich than an honest man. . . . If he was the son of the King I would not marry him after that letter. And since you have seen me in tears, I beg you to tell him that it is not for any regret I have for him," and so retired from the room.[2] Catherine was always interested in the fate of her servitors and naturally felt resentment over this piteous scene, so that if she needed any spur to be active in helping to prepare for the war, she had

[1] Brant. III, 231; Granvelle (1) IV, 749.
[2] Le Laboureur II, 388.

helped to carry against the Constable's influence, it came to her from this affair.

From one class of people to whom she had granted protection and shown great personal kindness ever since she came to France, Catherine now received a grateful return. During the previous discussions about war in Italy, the Florentine exiles in France had offered to lend the King 400,000 crowns at 16% and 200,000 more without interest for two years, to be used against the Duke of Tuscany. The Queen now sent her maître d'hôtel, a Florentine, to the exiles at Lyons to urge them to offer money to the King. He came back in about six weeks with the offer to pay 2,000 foot and 400 horse against Tuscany.[1]

The Duke of Ferrara had been appointed Captain-General of the League with an enormous salary, but he deputed the actual command to his son-in-law, the Duke of Guise, who crossed the Alps with thirteen thousand picked troops, partly drawn from the northern provinces of Picardy and Champagne, thus left exposed to the enemy.[2] Though at one stage in the negotiations it had been stipulated that the war should be begun in Tuscany, the aim of the Guise had always been Naples. It was indeed arranged in the treaty that the conquered crown was to be given to one of the younger sons of Henry II, but Guise, who had some ostensible hereditary claim upon that crown, expected at least the regency. He was glad, therefore, that the defense of the Pope against the Spanish General, Alva, drew him to the south.

The costly and audacious enterprise whose one chance of success lay in the faithful sacrifices of untrustworthy allies, ended in failure. Guise was obliged to raise the siege of the little town of Civitella. Habile captain as he always was, he drew off his troops without disaster but Alva held him stalemated near Rome, with nothing to do but nurse his men attacked by disease and watch his Italian allies go

[1] Cal. Ven., 12 Jan., 14 Oct., 16 Nov., 1556.
[2] Decrue (2), 194.

over to the enemy. From the discredit of this breakdown of his military and diplomatic plans, he was called home May 28th, 1558, by a polite note from the Constable of France. He seems to have purposely rather delayed his journey and, when he arrived, he was not met as an unsuccessful general back from an inglorious and mistaken military adventure, but as the most powerful man beside the throne. He was greeted by a Latin poet as "the greatest leader of the French, the only man who can raise once more the fallen fortunes of France from the catastrophe which has cast her prostrate never to rise unless he helps her." [1]

[1] Mems. Journaux, Guise, 358. L'Hôpital III, 232.

CHAPTER VI

DISASTER AND SORROW

The thing which gave the unsuccessful general the rôle of national leader, was a great national misfortune. His old rival, the Constable, who directed the resistance to the Imperialist invasion, made a tactical blunder. The superior force of the enemy had taken advantage of it to destroy utterly the main army of France and this spectacular disaster had wiped out for the moment all remembrance of the fundamentally bad strategy of Guise.

The Spaniards and English invading France from the north with an army of about fifty thousand men, had invested Saint Quentin, heroically defended by the Constable's nephew, Admiral Coligny. The Constable, who had with difficulty gathered twenty thousand men, advanced somewhat incautiously to reinforce the besieged and then retreat. In this movement he was caught in a bad position and his army was all but annihilated, the tenth of August, 1557, in the battle of Saint Quentin. He and most of the French captains north of the Alps were taken prisoners by the Spaniards. The policy of renewing the war which he had so strenuously opposed and the diversion of a considerable number of the French troops south of the Alps, were really responsible for this national disaster, but the Constable, whose tactical blunder was nearest to it, bore in the eyes of the nation all the blame. That there were, however, some who saw the whole truth the following distich proves: "Henryco parcit populus, maledicet Montmorency, Dianam odit sed magis Guisardos" (The people spare Henry, curse Montmorency, hate Diana, but more the Guise). Many captains of the day and many historians since, have blamed the Spaniards for not pushing on at once

to Paris. But Paris has never been too easy to take and the difficulties of provisioning a rapidly invading army would have been very great. A contemporary biographer of Philip II puts much wisdom in small space when he writes, "Philip feared lest, like his father, he might march into France eating peacocks and march out eating turnips." [1]

The alarm in Paris was great, but the King, after a moment of despair and rage, showed great courage. He ordered the bulk of the army in Piedmont to come back over the Alps by forced marches. He diverted toward Paris the 6,000 Swiss which had been raised to reinforce Guise in Italy. He ordered all soldiers, gentlemen or others who had ever borne arms, to rally at Laon under command of the Duke of Nevers. He wrote to all his allies asking help and in two days more than two hundred couriers were sent riding in all directions. At the time of the disaster the King was established at Compiègne, about thirty miles behind the permanent entrenched camp of the French army, and he had with him the Queen and the royal council. Just before the battle, he had sent the Queen and the council back to Paris to attend to some matters there. On the 12th of August the Cardinal of Sens, keeper of the Great Seal of France, appeared before the Parlement of Paris. He said he was come by order of the King and Queen to inform them that, although the state was in danger, it was not so great that it was not possible to find a remedy for it. It was the first misfortune that had befallen the King since he came to the throne ten years before. The King had decided to be here tomorrow and meantime, following his orders, the Queen had proposed to come this morning into this court of Parlement, but she was worn out and ill. She had therefore commanded him to give notice to the court of Parlement to appoint a deputation to meet her at the Hôtel de Ville to take counsel concerning the state of the kingdom.[2]

[1] Société I Int. 47, Cordoba I, 187.

[2] Société Doc., pntd. II, 257. Rev. des. Qts. Hist., 32, p. 478. B. N. Dupuy, pntd. Société II, 264.

The next afternoon the Queen appeared before Parlement. It was the first great public occasion of her life and she rose to it with extraordinary success. The Venetian Ambassador wrote to the Doge and Senate on the 14th of August, 1557: "Yesterday the Most Christian Queen, to settle the business with the citizens commenced by her during the King's absence to obtain the subsidy she had caused to be demanded, went in person to the Parlement house, accompanied by certain cardinals and a number of princes, and in a very grave form of speech represented the present need, adding that, although the most Christian King had incurred such vast expenditure during the past wars, yet, nevertheless, he had always had more regard for the cities than for any other estate of this realm, to which fact he required no other testimony but that of their own consciences, reminding them of how little they had contributed hitherto; but as the need continued, his Majesty did not consider it fitting any longer to burden the people, who for the ordinary expenditure were very heavily taxed and yet more exorbitantly through the extra imposts. Wherefore it was necessary for the cities, remembering so many benefits and favors received from His Majesty, to demonstrate to the whole world, in this the kingdom's extreme need, their fidelity and affection for their Prince. Her Majesty spoke with such earnestness and eloquence that every one was moved; and she said in conclusion that the Most Christian King required a vote of 300,000 francs, adding that she would then retire, to leave them free, as usual, to deliberate, which she did by withdrawing into a room. It was immediately voted to comply with her Majesty's demand, . . . and they then respectfully prayed Her Majesty to use her good offices with the King in favor of their privileges. The Queen thanked them in so sweet a form of speech that she made well nigh the whole Parlement shed tears from emotion. She told them that, remembering this their demonstration towards her, she would always consider them her clients, and she promised to

appoint her son, the Dauphin, their advocate and intercessor with the Most Christian King. Thereupon the Parlement adjourned, greatly applauding Her Majesty, and with such marks of extreme satisfaction as to defy exaggeration; and all over Paris nothing is talked of but the prudent and gracious manner adopted by Her Majesty in this business, everybody declaring that, had it been managed by any other person, there would neither have been so much liberality nor so much readiness to give. The determination of this city to give His Majesty 300,000 francs will yield about a million and a half of gold; it being customary that when Paris forms a resolve of this sort, she does so for herself and for all the other towns of the kingdom, each of them thus knowing her proportional quota. In a month the King will have about 60,000 men." [1]

Some days later the Venetian Ambassador wrote again describing an interview with the Queen: "I told her Majesty that I had heard with great satisfaction that the whole of this city commended her address and mode of proceeding in the Parlement, thus obtaining vast supplies for the King and infinite praise for herself. She spoke of the blunder the Constable had made through too great self-confidence. 'Oh!' she cried, 'that the Constable who has not his equal in Christendom should have fallen into such an affair! And I give you my word,' she went on, 'he went away determined not to fight. When he took leave of me I said, "Gossip, for the love of God beware, and consider the consequences of any misfortune." He answered, "Madame, I know what is needed—do not be anxious—I know how to take care of myself." ' " [2]

Before the end of the year the Duke of Guise was established between Paris and the enemy with an army of thirty-five thousand men. As a general Guise was as lucky as he was skilful in handling troops. It was his good fortune that the whole blame for the mistaken policy of

[1] Cal. Ven., 14 Aug. 1557. B. N. fds. fr. 15494 Montaignes Histoire, etc.
[2] Cal. Ven., 21 Aug. 1557, p. 149.

renewing the war had fallen upon his great rival, the Constable. It was now to be his further good fortune to get the entire credit in the eyes of the world for a victory which was due to the strategy of another man.

From the beginning of his reign, the King had been almost possessed with the idea of recovering Calais from the English. The pride of the English in holding that French seaport was out of all proportion to its value to them. They had cut into the arch of the gate an inscription saying "the Frenchmen will take Calais when iron and lead float like cork." The King forced the Duke of Guise, against his continued remonstrance, to attack Calais suddenly in the depth of winter. On January 9th "at the wedding ball of the daughter of the Duchess of Bouillon with the son of the Duke of Nevers, while the King was dancing in the dusk of the evening, a messenger came from the Duke of Guise to say that a flag of truce had just been raised on the walls of Calais with the offer to surrender. Not only the King and the court and the Queen, but this entire population make such a great rejoicing that greater could not be made for any other event." The Duke was covered with rewards and honors. All the poets sang his praises and although the truth was known to those at court, yet the brilliant figure of the conqueror replaced in the popular imagination the sombre personality of the King, to whose wise counsel this triumph, which seemed to wipe out the previous defeat, was really due.[1]

But no brilliant stroke like the taking of Calais, however much it might humiliate the hereditary enemy of France, could change the fact that those who had opposed the renewal of war with Spain had been right. Even if Saint Quentin had been a victory, France would not have been able to maintain the struggle long. Her complete financial exhaustion, as well as internal disorders which will be explained later, rendered peace imperatively necessary.

[1] Cal. Vcn., 9 Jan. 1558. van Dyke Am. Hist. Soc., 1911. The Taking of Calais.

Spain was little less exhausted and Philip II, who had not wished the renewal of the war, was really more ready to make peace than he allowed it to appear in the negotiations.

The great advocate of the policy of peace, the Constable, was indeed a prisoner in the hands of Spain. But his traditional friendship for the House of Hapsburg and his well known and long standing desire for the policy of conciliation, made him a very influential prisoner and, with the French King also, his influence seemed to be increased rather than diminished by his absence. In all his letters Henry II expressed the most unbounded affection for him, and no sagacious man could fail to see by the outcome that, in spite of the defeat of Saint Quentin and the victory of Calais, the honors of statecraft really rested with him and not with his brilliant rival, the Duke of Guise. The Queen did not yet see this, but she wrote her "gossip" very friendly letters like the following:

"My Gossip:

"I was very glad to hear news of you by Meru, particularly that your wound is doing well and I pray God that very soon you will be in as good health as I desire. . . . The King and all his children are very well and after Easter he will leave here to attend the marriage of his son and the Queen of Scotland at Paris; where I wish that it would please God that you could be. I assure you that you are much longed for out of a good heart for the pleasure which I assure myself that you would have to see the King and all this company in such good condition, because no one talks of anything except making good cheer and joy and pleasure. God by His grace be willing to continue us in this condition and also be willing to remove you very soon from the place where you are and, in waiting upon His pleasure, I beg you not to bore yourself too much and to take pains to take care of yourself and to recover your perfect health, in order to be able to see once more your master and all the rest of us with as much joy as I pray God to give you in it: which will be the place where I shall recommend myself to your good grace.

"From Fontainbleau, 27th of March—your good gossip and friend,

"Caterine." [1]

[1] Letts. I, 117.

The marriage to which Catherine alluded took place in April, 1558, and we know that it was not particularly pleasing to the Constable,[1] although Catherine politely expressed her sorrow that he was not to be present at the wedding. The closer connection between the reigning lines of the House of Lorraine and the royal House of France had been discussed even before the taking of Calais,[2] and that brilliant feat of arms sealed the negotiations. This closer alliance was to be a double one: Claude, the daughter of Henry and Catherine, was to marry the Duke of Lorraine, and Francis, the Dauphin, was to marry the little Queen of Scots, daughter of Mary, the sister of the Cardinal of Lorraine and the Duke of Guise. This marriage of state was also a marriage of affection for they had been brought up together and were deeply attached to each other. The ceremony was a splendid one. The Venetian Ambassador thus describes it:

"Yesterday the wedding ceremonies of the Dauphin and the Queen of Scotland ended, the bride having completed her fifteenth year in the beginning of last December, the bridegroom being fourteen years old on the eighteenth of January last. These nuptials were really considered the most regal and triumphant of any that have been witnessed in this kingdom for many years, whether from the point of view of the company—all the chief personages of the realm, both temporal and spiritual, being assembled, including the Cardinal Legate and all the other Ambassadors—or from the pomp and riches of the jewels and apparel of the lords and ladies, or from the grandeur of the banquet and the stately service of the tables, or from the costliness of the masquerade and other revels. These ceremonies have especially gratified and contented the Parisian people (amongst whom money was thrown on entering the church as a mark of greater joy) because for two hundred years and upward there is no record of any Dauphin having been married within the realm. All, on the contrary, had been married abroad and brought their wives after the ceremony either from Spain, England, Flanders or Germany. Henceforth the Dauphin will no longer be styled simply the Dauphin, but the King Dauphin, and

[1] Cal. Ven. App. 1558.
[2] Cal. Ven. 1095, 1098, 1115.

the Queen in like manner will be called the Queen Dauphiness: the two crowns of France and of Scotland being united in their arms. The King of Navarre gave me a hint in private conversation that the Constable had been among the many opponents of this marriage."

How much honor and power this alliance with the royal house brought to the cadet branch of the House of Lorraine is suggested by the fact that the Senate of Venice wrote letters of congratulation to the groom and to the bride, to the father and mother of the groom, the King and Queen of France, and to the Cardinal of Lorraine and the Duke of Guise, the uncles of the orphan bride. This great increase of the power of the Lorraines did not make things any easier at court. The Venetian Ambassador reported, "They already write from court about a division between these two ministers and their families and that the factions have declared themselves openly." [1]

The natural jealousy and the rivalry of the two houses was brought to a climax by the renewal of that great dispute in regard to the policy of the crown on which they had always taken opposite sides. The Constable and his friends wanted peace. The Cardinal of Lorraine, the Duke of Guise and their friends wanted war, or at least they wanted to insist upon better terms of peace than Spain was willing to grant. The pitch of intensity to which this jealousy and hatred finally rose is shown in a scene which took place in the midst of the negotiation with Spain, during one of the times when the Constable was released on parole. It was described to the Venetian Ambassador by the Prince of Ferrara, who took part in it. "The Duke of Guise told the Prince of Ferrara and the Duke of Nemours to be at a certain place outside of the palace at St. Germain. Guise then went and found Francis Montmorency, the Constable's oldest son, in the Queen's room. Drawing him by the hand he said with a smile that he wanted to talk with him. They went out joking, but when Guise got him to the place where

[1] Cal. Vcn., 25 App. 1558, ib. pp. 1229–1234.

he had asked his friends to wait he turned and said: 'I have brought you here because I have heard you have maligned me and said things to my dishonor which I resent. Draw your sword and fight.' Francis denied having said anything to his dishonor. But on returning to the palace he went to the King and told him and his father. The King was much displeased but the Constable affected to make nothing of the affair." The Guises seemed to have the advantage, for they were always at the ear of the King. Guise was a victorious general, the Constable a defeated prisoner, and Diana, always a jealous rival of the Constable for Henry's affection, had become an active enemy at the time of the Lady Fleming affair. For a long while they would not speak to each other. Finally at the instance of the King they made peace on the surface, but "in the bottom of their hearts their hate is as great as ever." [1]

But now the veteran courtier made a great stroke in the game, which is recorded in a letter of the Venetian Ambassador: "The conditions of the suggested peace are openly blamed by many, but the Constable has written a letter to the King and another letter to the Duchess of Valentinois. . . . The Duke of Guise is afraid that the Constable and the Duchess, who is now so united to the Constable that they are one and the same, will persuade the King to peace —to the great shame of the King and the universal discontent of the entire kingdom." The results of this stroke of the Constable in winning the alliance of Diana are described in a letter of Cardinal Trivulzio to Cardinal Caraffa dated the 15th of November, 1558:

"I wrote yesterday to Your Illustrious Excellency informing you that there was no hope of peace. Today I hear from a most excellent source that His Majesty, returning from hunting, had a long conversation with Mme. de Valentinois, who had received letters, as the King had also, from the Constable, written with his own hand. He went from there into the council of affairs, where he said that he had come to announce his decision in favor

[1] Cal. Vcn., 15 Nov. 1558.

of peace. When one of the councillors wished to continue an argument against his decision, he bade him be silent." [1]

It was at this time the Constable received the following letter:

"MONSIEUR:—

"I have received the letters which you have written to me, for which I thank you very humbly for the trouble which you have taken because I believe *your work is so great that you have really no leisure to write to me with your own hand and it suffices me to simply receive a remembrance from you but nevertheless the secretary who is finishing the half of my letter and I myself recommend ourselves to your good grace* and we pray God to give you that which you desire. This comes from *your ancient and best friends,*

"HENRY—DIANA." [2]

A month later Strozzi wrote to a friend:

"The marriage of Montmorency [the Constable's son] with the oldest daughter of Mme. Valentinois [Diana] will take place soon after the return of the Constable, which is a reason why a very strong confederation has been formed between the two, which has caused much astonishment to many people because of the little friendship which they had in the past. This new combination made every effort to gain the Queen and to draw her from her party and it is feared that between this and her fear of displeasing the King, Her Majesty will allow herself to be gained, although she swears and affirms that this will never happen." [3]

One ambassador has told us how this quarrel among the men of these two rival factions came to drawn swords. Let another tell us how the quarrel between the women came to words as sharp as swords:

"The Duke of Guise says that the day before they had made His Majesty promise with an oath never to surrender Piedmont, . . . the Queen had very bravely urged His Majesty, as far as she possibly could, not to confirm his mind in a resolution so little

[1] Cal. Vcn., 15 Nov., Arch. Mod. qtd. Romier II, 312 N.
[2] Guiffret, 161. The underscored words in the King's hand; the others in Diana's.
[3] Mss. qtd. Romier II, 311 N. 3.

honorable as to surrender it, even kneeling at his feet in order to turn him from this resolution, calling out to him that the Constable had never done anything but evil. To this the King responded that the Constable had always done well and that they had done evil who had ever counseled him to break the truce and so, without being the least moved from his opinion, he left her with these words. . . . The Queen, being in her cabinet after this scene, reading, in order to pass the time, the history of this kingdom, Madame the Seneschale [Diana] entered and demanded of Her Majesty whether she was reading anything that was good. The Queen answered her, 'I am reading the history of this kingdom and I find that always from time to time courtesans (to use the word that she used) have been influential in the affairs of kings,' and left her with this word." [1]

Whether Catherine's long patience broke down in this instance and she really flung this harsh speech in the teeth of her husband's mistress or not, cannot be told for certain. This may be an exaggerated report. But certain it is that Catherine suffered the tortures of jealousy during those thirteen years when she bore her husband ten children and that, at least once, she was tempted to a protest much more vigorous than any words she could have used. A strange chance has preserved for us a record of an unaccomplished crime, a planned revenge of the Queen against her rival which shows a state of Catherine's mind which renders this reported scene at least probable and makes plain that the posthumous complacence with which she wrote of the situation to Henry IV in the letter already quoted, is the record of a seeming indifference which masked a heart torn by the fiercest passion.

In May, 1561 (about two years after her husband's death) the Duke of Nemours wrote to Catherine: "I have always been ready to employ myself to do you humble service without considering, provided you were satisfied with it, the good or evil which might come to me from it. If you please you can remember that this is so." [2]

[1] Arch. Mod., qtd. Romier II, 314 N. 1.
[2] B. N. Fds. fr. 3159 f. 49. Letter answered by Catherine 21 May, 1561. Letts. I, 197.

The meaning of this allusion would have been lost but for a curious incident. The following October the Duke of Nemours fled hastily from court under suspicion of being engaged in a plot to abduct one of the princes. He wrote in his own excuse, a letter, which repeats this allusion to some dangerous service he had been willing to do for Catherine: "I recollect that you were pleased to trust me and use me in many things; which I thought a great honor because they were things of great consequence to you. I remember also the pleasure I took to do you favors in them and the devotion and service with which I gave myself to do a thing which was agreeable, without reminding you of the danger and enmity which might follow for me from such an action if it should become known, chiefly from him or those whom it concerned." This letter was copied in a selection made in the 18th century of documents concerning his attempt to carry off the little prince.[1] In that copy the above allusion to some unknown dangerous service which Nemours had once offered to do for Catherine, was underscored and in the margin there had been written by the copyist: "In the original copy sent to Mon. de Limoges (Ambassador to Spain) there is, at the end of the underscored lines, a reference to a footnote at the bottom of the page which is here put at the bottom of the letter." The copyist preceded his record of the lost footnote with these words: "Note in the hand of Claude de L'Aubespine (one of Catherine's secretaries with an unmistakable hand, brother of the Ambasador to Spain): "The Queen laughed heartily when she saw in the letter of Mon. de Nemours the lines marked and recalled that she wanted to use him, when she was so angered at Madame de Valentinois, to throw a strong distilled water in her face, as if in sport, which would have disfigured her for life. And so she had thought to get back the King her husband; but, on further reflection, she decided not to do it. Please burn this letter after you have read it." The original copy sent to Spain

[1] B. N. Fds. fr. 6608.

is also in the Bibliothèque Nationale [1] but the bottom of the sheet containing the original of the above note of the secretary has been cut off by a knife or a pair of scissors. Curiously enough this original note of Catherine's secretary, doubtless cut off to be stolen, was repurchased in 1913 and returned to the Bibliothèque Nationale [1] and it enables us to read her heart at this time better than almost all those who lived with her at the court of France. Not only this criminal impulse which never passed into action, but the very active part the Queen played in the struggle to win the King for peace or war, escaped the notice of all the sharp-eyed and curious ambassadors resident at the French court except the Ambassador of Ferrara, whose relation to the Duchess of Guise, his master's daughter and Catherine's intimate friend, gave him sources of secret information.

That the King was more anxious for peace than he was willing to confess to the importunate advocates of war who backed the counsel of the Cardinal of Lorraine and the Duke of Guise, is evident from the following letters written to the captive Constable:

"My Friend:

"I assure you that Mons. de Guise does not want peace, pointing out to me every day that I have more means for continuing the war than I ever had and that I shall not make so great a loss in continuing the war as I shall have if you come to an arrangement. . . . Do what you can to give us peace and do not show this letter to any one but Marshal St. André and after that burn it."

And a little later he wrote:

"I would gladly suffer death which I would consider happy and I would die content, if I could see a good peace."

There was a secret pressure for peace from the Spanish King as strong as that brought to bear on the Constable by Henry II. He wrote to his peace commissioner:

[1] B. N. Fds. fr. 6618 f. 52. Scribner's Magazine, July, 1910: "An Unfinished Crime," with facsimiles, by Paul van Dyke.

"I find myself under an absolute impossibility of continuing the war. I have already spent twelve hundred thousand ducats which I raised from Spain two or three months ago, and I have need of another million in the coming month of March. They have sent me from Spain Doctor de Lasco to assure me that they cannot do anything more for me. The situation seems to me so very grave that, under pain of losing everything, I must come to some sort of an arrangement. I am waiting with a very active impatience for news, but on no account whatever must these negotiations be broken off." [1]

The peace which was made under these conditions, on the French side chiefly by the Constable assisted by the Cardinal of Lorraine, was not simply a dynastic peace, between the houses of Hapsburg and Valois, or even a national peace between France and Spain. As the contemporary de Thou points out, it "included the Pope, the Emperor, all the princes and states of the Empire, the Kings of Poland, Sweden, Denmark and Scotland, the Queen of England, the Republic of Venice, Switzerland and the Dukes of Lorraine, Savoy, Ferrara, Mantua, Urbino, Parma, and Piacenza and the Republics of Genoa and Lucca; so that it was not a peace between the French and Spaniards but between all Christian princes." It remained, on the whole, the base of the public law of Europe for about a hundred years until the Peace of Westphalia.[2]

The Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis was no such ostensibly brilliant victory for France as the Truce of Vaucelles, but it retained the most valuable of the conquests of Henry II, the Bishopric of Metz, Toul and Verdun, Boulogne and Calais; the last under the guise of a temporary occupation which everybody suspected would be permanent. This restricted France to her natural boundaries by giving up the conquests which had been made in Italy at the expense of the Duke of Savoy, who was restored to his estates; with the exception of a few fortresses which were to be held for

[1] Guiffret 155. B. N. fds. fr. 3139, qtd. de Ruble (1). Granvelle (1) V, 453, Comp. 397.
[2] De Thou, II, 664.

a time by France. The reinstated Duke was to marry the Princess Marguerite, sister of Henry II. France therefore gained the advantage of having on its borders to the northeast and the southeast, two buffer states, Lorraine and Savoy, bound to it by marriage alliances. The long rivalry between Hapsburg and Valois was also to be ended by a marriage. Philip II, on the death of his first wife, Mary Tudor, had vainly tried to persuade her successor, Elizabeth, to marry him. He now proposed that the oldest daughter of Henry II, Elizabeth, who had been engaged to his oldest son, Carlos, should become the Queen of Spain, and Catherine, who had seen her eldest son married at fifteen, was now to see her eldest daughter married at fourteen.

The Venetian Ambassador wrote home: "Both at Paris and in all other towns of the kingdom, this peace, published by the sound of trumpet and proclaimed by the royal heralds, was received with demonstrations of universal joy as shown by bonfires and public tables prepared in the streets." But the states of Germany and Italy which had been allied to France, and to which any peace meant an increased pressure from the Hapsburgs and their friends, looked upon this settlement of the long war between the two houses with an evil eye. In addition the whole warrior class, and that meant practically the entire nobility, regarded it as a disgrace to France. The Duke of Guise, in whose hearing the King was explaining the reasons for peace, broke out in great excitement: "I swear to you, sire, that this is an evil road, for, even if you should do nothing but lose during thirty years, you could not lose what you are now giving up at a single stroke. Put me in the worst and weakest city of those which you are giving up and I will gain more glory holding it in the breach than I shall ever be able to do, under a peace so disadvantageous." When Marshal Brissac, who had held Piedmont victoriously for France, heard of it, he exclaimed in despair, "Oh miserable France, to what loss and ruin hast thou allowed thyself

to be thus reduced, Thou who wast triumphant over all the nations of Europe!" [1]

This attitude of the Italian and German allies of France, rebels against the ruling influences in their own lands, and the chagrin of the French fighting men, has on the whole dominated history which, in the past, has been to a great extent written by men who could not escape from the delusion that the strength and glory of a nation are increased when it exercises a usurped dominion over unwilling peoples and imposes its language and civilization on those who hate them. But in modern times, when some historians have begun to have a real sympathy for the rights of other nationalities than their own, this "glory of France" attitude toward the Peace of Cateau-Cambrésis, has been replaced by one more critical and more reasonable. That the haste of the Constable to be free and the impatience of Henry II, kept France from taking full advantage of the necessities of Spain, seems probable. But the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis brought France two great advantages. It freed her from the "chimera of Italian conquest," and it brought her permanent defenses where they were most needed. Calais against England, Metz against Germany, were "bulwarks of incalculable value," worth far more than Piedmont for, as Etienne Pasquier wrote at the time, "Italy was never any use to us French except as a tomb when we invaded it." [2]

After the game whose prize was the control of the King's mind, was lost, Catherine did not continue the struggle or sulk over her defeat. Whatever her personal chagrin may have been, the defeat of the war party could not have been a very serious matter to her. Her natural inclinations were all against war and if she pleaded for it in this instance, it was only because of her interest in Italy, strengthened perhaps by a temporary pique against the Constable. For desperate fighting on the northern border

[1] Cal. Ven. 18 App. 1559. Villars, 316, 318.
[2] Battifol. Ranke. Pasquier (2), Bk. IV, 1.

she had no stomach and she had learned once for all the untrustworthiness of the allies of France in Italy. She returned to her habitual passive acquiescence in her husband's wishes—the normal rôle of a Queen of France—and those activities as titular head of the ladies of the French court which, during her entire life, always gave her great pleasure. Catherine had a very womanly delight in match-making, which lasted until her seventieth year, when she arranged the marriage of her favorite grand-daughter. When she came to great power the best explanation of her changeable policy is often to be found in this ruling passion for making good marriages for her children. It probably helped her at this time to accept her defeat and write a graceful letter to the Duke of Savoy, one of the two bride-grooms of the peace.

"My Brother:

"I have seen in a letter which you have written me the joy and contentment which you find in this peace, which is no less great on my part, knowing the good which it brings to all Christendom and particularly the good which it brings to you; . . . as I have prayed the Count of Stropian to tell you more at length and to assure you that, besides the honor and the friendship which I have all my life had for Madame my sister [her sister-in-law Marguerite] . . . I have hoped for you what I now see accomplished; remembering the alliance which in other days your house and mine had with one another. For, knowing her as I do, I am certain that, besides the honor which this will bring you, you couldn't receive a greater happiness and contentment than you will receive with her. . . . I recommend myself very heartily to your good grace praying God to keep you in His holy keeping. From Fontainebleau this 25th of April, 1559.

"Your good sister, Caterine." [1]

She began at once to make preparations for the ceremony and in the end of April she wrote to the daughter of the Governor-General of Piedmont asking her to get from her father a passport which would enable the merchants from whom "Count Theophile had bought some cloth of

[1] Letts. I, 120.

gold, some silk and other clothes while he was passing through Milan, to send them quickly to France and not to allow any export duty to be charged on them for fear of delaying their delivery." [1] Catherine had need of fine clothes, for any ceremonial of the French court was sure to be a most elaborate affair.

No king of the sporting tendencies of Henry II could possibly plan a great public ceremonial without giving himself a chance to enjoy the favorite amusement of a tournament. Magnificent lists were prepared for three days' jousting. Henry bore himself with his usual skill and vigor; for with him a tournament was no mere formal affair. When he was a young man the Venetian Ambassador records that, riding against his father, Francis I, he got "such a blow in the face that he couldn't forget it very soon, because it took away a great piece of flesh." When the jousts came he played a large part in them. He broke a lance with the Duke of Savoy and another with the Duke of Guise. He ran a third course with the young Count of Montgomery, captain of the Scottish Guards. The shock was so rude that the King lost his stirrup and was visibly shaken in his saddle. Much chagrined to have been almost unseated in the presence of the brilliant assemblage by a young man, the King wanted to break another lance with his antagonist. He had borrowed a war horse of the Duke of Savoy with which he was very much pleased, and the Duke and several others now begged him, as the hour was late, not to ride again. His wife also sent a messenger from the ladies' stand to beg him not to ride another course, for she was troubled by prophecies of diviners, whom, like many patrons of the Renascence, she was wont to consult. But he said he would only ride this one and he mounted in such haste that he did not wait to have the vizor of his helmet properly adjusted. "When the trumpet sounded," the English Ambassador writes, "young Mr. de Montgomery gave him such a counter-buff as, first lighting on the King's

[1] Letts. I, 121.

head and taking away his pannage (whereupon there was a great plume of feathers), which was fastened to his head-piece with iron, did break his staff and with the rest of the staff hitting the King's face, he drove a splinter right over his eye on the right side, the force of which stroke was so vehement that he had great ado to keep himself on horse-back and the horse did somewhat yield." [1]

The King was lifted from the saddle and when they took off his helmet a flood of blood covered his whole head. The Queen and the Dauphin, who were on the tribune, fainted and the ladies of the court uttered screams of alarm. They carried him to the palace which was at the side of the lists. He tried to walk up the staircase but had to be helped by the Constable, the Duke of Guise and the Cardinal of Lorraine. Behind him came another group carrying the Dauphin, who still lay in a dead faint. They took a splinter of wood four inches long from the wound, besides four other smaller pieces. The King bore the painful operation with extraordinary courage, and it was at first believed that he would escape with the loss of one eye, but blood poisoning set in and he began to sink into lethargy and show signs of approaching death. Catherine watched by the bedside of her husband and would not allow Diana to come near him. He talked with spirit at intervals and asked to see his young captain to assure him that he knew he had hurt him only by accident. He even ordered that the feast and the tournament should be begun again in a few days. But in spite of these rallies he continued to sink. Better surgical knowledge might perhaps have saved him, but he had by his bed the best surgeons and doctors of the day. The feeble Dauphin, as his father grew worse, wandered about the palace, beating his head against the walls and crying, "My God! how can I live if my father dies." The King, in a lucid interval, sent for the lad, took him by the hand and said, "My boy, you are going to be without your father, but not without his blessing. I pray God to make you

[1] Rel. I, 2, p. 271. Pasquier (who was present), Cal. F. 1558-59, p. 346.

more fortunate than I have been." A short time after this scene, and eleven days after the accident, Henry II died, in his forty-first year.[1]

The Venetian Ambassador reports that when he went to pay his visit of condolence, the Queen Mother answered in a tone of voice so sad and feeble that no one, even by the strictest attention, could hear what she said. Seven months later Marie Stuart wrote to her mother, "She (the Queen Mother), is still so grieved and suffered so much during the illness of the late King that I am afraid she will have a serious illness because of her sorrow." [2] That the loss of this unfaithful but kind husband was a great grief to Catherine, we know not only from what she or others said at the time of his death, but in many ways. Scandal has never been more common or more malignant than at the court of Henry II and his three sons, but the enemies of Catherine, who afterwards accused her of every possible and many impossible crimes, did not accuse her of unfaithfulness even to her husband's memory. She had always been accustomed to dress magnificently, but though she increased the band of maids of honor and gentlewomen which had made the court of Henry II so brilliant and ordered them to dress in the most superb fashion, she never again put on anything but black; marking festival days by wearing velvet. There is no picture of her after the age of forty without the black headdress of a widow. It was in the taste of the time that she took as her new coat of arms a heap of quick-lime on which tears were falling, with the motto, "ardorem extincta testantur vivere flamma. See! the glow lingers though the flame be gone."

The gay and brilliant Queen, true daughter of Florence, who loved to ride to hounds and shoot with the arbalest and play tennis, who made the most beautiful embroidery, who was fond of dances and comedies and "very ready to laugh," whose quickness at repartee was often shown at the

[1] Arch. Mod., Romier mss. qtd. II, 387 N.
[2] Qtd. Baschet 493, Labanoff I, 71.

informal receptions enlivened by music she gave in her rooms could not change that love of splendor and pleasure whose indulgence she had been taught to consider as one of the duties of her position.[1] It was not in the composition of her nervous system, as apt for laughter as for tears, to remain continuously depressed, but of all the sorrows which came to her, and she saw nine of her ten children and most of her friends die, none was so great or so lasting as the death of her husband. All during her life she gave many signs that she remembered him with pleasure and regret. She loved to talk about him. Brantôme writes in his gossipy style, "I have heard the Queen say (she did me the honor sometimes to talk to me) that the late King Henry was, in his youth, one of the best jumpers in the Court and no one could match him except Bonnivet—and sometimes one would beat and sometimes the other—but never by more than a couple of inches, and how he loved to jump ditches of twenty-two and twenty-three feet, which they often jumped, and how once Bonnivet would have been drowned in a ditch he tried to jump if the King had not saved him."

She remembered how he used to laugh at one of her nurses whose stream of language never ceased. Many years after his death, an abbé, writing to an Italian cardinal, said, "the Queen does not talk of anything except of the friendship which King Henry had for you and of the intimacies which he showed you." Seventeen years after his death she gave a sum of money for masses to be said at St. Denis for the repose of her husband's soul. Eight years later she did the same thing in the Convent of the Murate at Florence. Within a year of her death at seventy she wrote to her son to say that she was not sorry that the King of Navarre had broken an engagement with her of the greatest importance, because "Friday has been for me so unhappy because it was the day when the King your father was wounded; a wound which brought to me principally and to

[1] Brant., VIII, Vie de Cde. M.

HENRY II, HUSBAND OF CATHERINE DE MÉDICIS

From a painting in the Louvre attributed to François Clouet

all the kingdom so much evil that I cannot think on that day I can do anything good."

It was in sober truth that Catherine wrote to her daughter Elizabeth, a year and a half after King Henry's death, when her oldest son had followed him to the grave:

"For this reason, my dear daughter, recommend yourself well to God, because you have seen me as contented as you are, without a thought of ever having any other trouble than not to be loved as much as I wanted to be by the King your father, who honored me more than I merited, but I loved him so much that I had always fear, as you know, in many ways, and God has taken him away from me. For this, my dear daughter, remember me and let me serve as an example, so that you do not trust so much in the love which you bear your husband and in the honor and the ease which you have at this present moment, as to forget to recommend yourself to Him who can continue your happiness and also when it pleases Him put you into the state in which I am: for I would sooner die than see you there, from the fear that you could not carry so much trouble as I have had and still have, which I am sure without His help I would not know how to carry.

"Your good mother, CATERINE." [1]

[1] Letts. I, 568; VII, 441; IX, 187; X, 411, 494; Arch. Nap., qtd. Romier (1) I, 313.

CHAPTER VII

THE GREAT EUROPEAN CONVULSION

The death of Henry II in his prime was hailed by some of his subjects with the solemn joy with which a Hebrew prophet hailed the death of an open enemy of God. Villemadon, ancient servitor of Marguerite, Queen of Navarrè, sister of Francis I, an old courtier who had known Catherine well in her younger days, wrote to her soon after the death of her husband, a long letter in which he said,

"God, deeply angered and offended, permitted the late King to fall into hardness of heart so far as to make himself a . . . complete enemy of His Holy Word. . . . But He has been pleased to show that He knows well how to avenge Himself because in the middle of your triumph . . . even in the afternoon on whose morning there had been held a great council against His faithful ones, He caused the said King to die by the blow of a lance. . . . And, oh! extraordinary fortune, who killed him? Was it not the captain who but a little while before by his commandment had bound and imprisoned the innocent du Bourg, whom this poor King had sworn he would see burned with his own eyes before he left Paris? What has become of his eyes? What has the hand of God done to them? Oh, all you who love and fear the Almighty, I know that you know and see it clearly."[1]

In order to understand this letter we must look at the nature and history of the movement among the French people which had begun soon after the marriage of Catherine and had grown in spite of the increasing severity with which her father-in-law and her husband had tried to repress it. It was caused by the spread of a heresy which denounced as contrary to the word of God some of the ceremonies and teachings of the Universal Church of which

[1] Condé, I, 627.

the National Church of France was a part. Heresy was in the air when Catherine was born, and the movement which was to influence so deeply her life as Queen and ruler of France, was only a part of a general convulsion of European thought and society. This huge convulsion of European society in whose vortex the life of Catherine was caught, had three causes. First, the perception very wide-spread among active-minded men of the deep corruption of ecclesiastical institutions. Second, the intellectual movement spoken of as the Renascence. Third, the advance in the process of the formation of national feeling or patriotism.

The fact of the deep corruption of the Church and its great influence in producing heresy and schism, is plainly seen in almost the entire literature of the first two generations of the sixteenth century. The most convincing and the only unquestionable evidence of it, is to be found in the words of men who never became heretics and died in the communion of the ancient mother. This is the only sort of evidence upon this point that can be handled without the utmost caution. The intensity of the controversies about religion—controversies which soon added the sword to the pen as a weapon, and plunged Europe into a hundred years of intermittent war—the active, and conscientious hate bred by these wars and controversies, paralyzed the moral judgments of men. In the sixteenth century, no story was too bad to believe, with or without proof, against the other side. The champions of this great intellectual combat—the greatest the world has seen since the struggle of Christianity and paganism in the days of the Roman Empire—inherited also the bad habit of medieval polemics, made worse by the passions of the Italian fifteenth century Humanists, of considering attacks upon the personal character of any adversary as a legitimate, almost a necessary part of serious controversies. Hence, Martin Luther could not judge too harshly the moral conduct of that active defender of the Protestant cause, Philip of Hesse. It is very illuminating to see in the contemporary correspondence of

the friends of orthodoxy that, when Mary, Queen of Scots, had taken for her second husband the heretic Bothwell, they were inclined to give credence to that same evidence that she had murdered her second husband which in later days, when she had become the pillar of Catholicism and the martyr of the faith, seemed to them only the basest slanders of her enemies and the foes of God's truth. Few men who felt deeply in the controversies of the sixteenth century could be just to their oponents or were even willing to try to be. But when in such times a man gives testimony to the discredit of his own side, the reader need not fear that his eyes are blinded by zeal nor his judgment warped by prejudice.

A few examples of utterances of men who never ranged themselves among the heretics will show how widely the corruption of the Church and her need of sweeping reforms were accepted as facts in the first generations of the sixteenth century. Guicciardini, the Florentine historian, wrote, "It is not possible to say so much evil of the Court of Rome that it would not be truthfully possible to say more, because it is an infamy, an example of all the shames and opprobriums of the world. . . . I do not know which displeases me most, the ambitions, the avarice or the lust of the priests. For if each of these vices is odious in itself, each one, and all of them together are the more unfitting for the character of one who professes that his life depends upon God. Nevertheless, the position which I have occupied in the service of several Popes has compelled me to support their greatness on account of my own particular interests, and if it had not been for that consideration, I would have loved Martin Luther as I love myself, not to free myself from the laws of the Christian religion in the mode in which it is interpreted and understood generally, but to see reduced to the position where they ought to be, that crowd of scoundrels (the clergy) that is to say, compelled to live either without vices or without authority." [1]

[1] Guicciardini I, 27, 97.

Adrian VI, the first pope elected after Luther's revolt, said in his message to the German Reichstag, "We freely confess that God permits this persecution of His church because of human sins—especially the sins of prelates and priests . . . we know very well that from the Holy See itself there has proceeded much that was abominable . . . and the disease has spread from the head to the members." Erasmus whose chief works were sanctioned by the Pope wrote in 1521: "The corruption of the church, the degeneracy of the Holy See are universally admitted." [1] Pope Pius V wrote to the King of France: "The vices of the priests were the first cause of heresy. They furnished the material for the sermons of the heretics to draw upon the Church hatred and disdain and to disparage her doctrines. The ordinary ignorant man considers less what the priests speak than he does the manner in which they live. He is more influenced by their example than he is by their words and their bad morals deprive what they say of all authority." [2] The Emperor of Germany in 1565 insisted that the Pope must allow priests to marry, "for the people will not any more accept unmarried priests, because they all keep mistresses and try to seduce the wives of others." [3] The Venetian Ambassador writes in 1565, "The prelates of Spain live exceedingly luxuriously and there are very few of them who have not illegitimate children whom they do not conceal and they leave nothing undone to make them rich." [4] The Spanish Ambassador reported to Philip II in 1560 that the Cardinal of Lorraine spoke of "scandals in the church, and the abuses of ecclesiastics in words which could not be exceeded by any German" (Lutheran).[5] The poet, Pierre Gringoire, wrote at the beginning of the sixteenth century, "Simony is as much loved now as it was by Simon Magus and even if a man had as many eyes as Argus it would be hard for

[1] Lett. to Jonas.
[2] Qtd. Brimont I, 395 N. 3.
[3] Granvelle (1), IX, 225.
[4] Rel. I, 5, p. 79. Bratli, 159, gives titles of many books written by orthodox men denouncing the corruption in the Spanish Church.
[5] A. N. K. 1493 f. 43, Comp. Forbes 338.

him to see perfect pastors." Two generations later Ronsard wrote, "But if Saint Paul should come back here below, what would he say of our young prelates who take no care of their poor flocks whose wool they shear and sometimes strip off even the skins: all of whom live without labor, without preaching, without praying, without giving a good example; perfumed, barbered, hangers on at court, lovers, gallants, hunters and sportsmen, who waste with bad women that property of God of which they are nothing but the guardians." [1]

But this fact of corruption, though it would undoubtedly in time have produced reforms, would not of itself have produced the great schism between northern and southern Christianity which is usually and by a narrow, unprecise use of words spoken of as "The Reformation." To do that two other forces coöperated. One of the causes was the movement which historians during the last fifty years, have agreed to describe as the Renascence. This term has been used by writers in two senses. At first it was employed to denote merely the results of the revival of the influence of the models of classic antiquity in literature and the plastic arts. But the term has come to be used in a wider and deeper sense to denote a general broadening and quickening of the human spirit, forming new judgments and finding new sources of pleasure and new methods of expression in all branches of human activity. The effect of the Renascence is, of course, most visible and its processes can be most easily traced in the history of the plastic arts. But the central and most characteristic movement of the Renascence was the spread of a new theory of education which gradually brought in a new way of looking at life, made education fashionable among the classes who had the best chances in the world and therefore rapidly changed some of the ideas prevalent among men who had great influence upon human institutions and the condition of society.

One of the springs of this central movement of the

[1] Gringoire I, 91. Ronsard VII, 43.

Renascence can be clearly seen in the life and writings of Petrarch, who died in the year 1374. His influence fostered in Italy a movement in favor of a "New Learning," defended and carried on by a class of men who called themselves the Humanists as opposed to the "Old Learning" of the Scholastics, who were quick to oppose every suggested change in the substance or methods of instruction. The traditional sway of the old Scholastic Learning was hotly defended by those monastic orders whose members had saved learning during the Dark Ages and built up the great medieval universities. One chief desire of the Humanists was to restore the knowledge of Greek; which, at the birth of Petrarch, could be read, so far as we know, by no man born west of the Adriatic. Another strong desire of the Humanists was to get back, in the case of any classic author, through modern comments, to the original text or manuscript of his works. Humanism, which rapidly found patrons among most of the princes and nobles of Italy, did not at first concern itself very much with religion. A certain number of the Humanists became pagans, though preserving an outward respect for the ceremonies and doctrines of the Church, and even the more pious Humanists (and in 1447 Humanism incarnate ascended the papal throne in the person of Nicholas V) did not apply to the sacred Scriptures that typical curiosity, that desire to get back to the original language and the original manuscripts which was one of their marked traits in the realm of classic literature.

But when Humanism and the New Learning spread across the Alps, as it did at the end of the fifteenth century, it took on a new spirit. In Spain, England, Switzerland, France, and Germany, it began to devote itself at once to the study of the Scriptures. The German scholar Reuchlin made a revived knowledge of Hebrew one of its instruments and henceforth pure Latin as opposed to medieval scholastic Latin, Greek and Hebrew, formed the triad typical of the New Learning. He and all the other northern Humanists were denounced as patrons of studies tending to worldliness

and heresy by the monks, most of whom remained passionate advocates of the Old Learning. The relation of this movement to the ancient desire for ecclesiastical reform, brought to a very acute stage by the corruption and Italianization of the papacy in which the Italian Renascence had played a large part, is evident at once. Carrying into the sphere of religion, that refusal to accept the assertions of mere traditional authority as a sufficient basis for truth, which had characterized the Italian Humanists in the realm of classic literature, the Transalpine Humanists began to investigate in the light of the Scriptures read in the original tongue, not only the evident corruption of ecclesiastical institutions but the whole realm of the usages, doctrines, and theories of the Church. In this field of Biblical interpretation, where a man determined to apply all the details of documents written in remote ages as a complete interpretation of all the conditions of life in his own times, can easily find confirmation of any of his strong beliefs, there could be gathered the material for an enormous controversy about religion.

The northern Humanists became almost without exception critics of the existing conditions of human society and of the Church. They had it pretty much all their own way at first, because the advocates of the Old Learning were not able to stand before them at all in debate. Men like Reuchlin, Erasmus, More and Ximenes swept the field. It looked as if they might almost succeed in bringing about a peaceful reform. But their triumph was only in words. They did not at first noticeably affect the actual condition of the Church and when the younger generation of transalpine Humanism led by men like Tyndale, Farel, Luther, Zwingli, Calvin and Knox took the road that led toward reform through heresy and schism, this older generation of Humanists who had criticised the Church so severely stood by her. It was the new intellectual attitude bred by the New Learning, the weapons of investigation and discussion furnished by the New Learning, and the existence among

the nobles and burghers of Western Europe of an audience whose minds had been opened and their spirits quickened by the New Learning, which underlay and rendered possible and significant this greatest controversy which has ever shaken the European world.

That controversy produced its tremendous results upon European institutions because of a third force coöperating with the influence of the Renascence and the scandals in the administration of the Church; the growing sense of national feeling developed into the modern passion of patriotism.

The Roman had felt very strongly the passion of patriotism and when his love of country had changed into that pride of race which led him to conquer as much of the world as seemed to him worth conquering, he succeeded, by his skill in the art of government, in creating a vast unified body of subjects of the Roman State which was informed by the soul of patriotism. The mass of the inhabitants of the Empire came during the second century to regard the Empire with affection, or at least with gratitude, and to consider the prospect of its destruction as the most dreadful of all conceivable catastrophes. But the Roman energy which had created the Empire was not sufficient to maintain it and spreading corruption made it, in the fifth century, a huge hulk without informing spirit. Its inhabitants were no longer willing to die for an institution that had no beneficent or inspiring relation to their lives. The barbarians who attempted to animate the pieces of the vast machine with their own rude force, never really grasped the Roman conception of a state and their kingdoms gave no free fields for the regrowth of patriotism. Even the powerful personality of Charlemagne was not able to mold the old Teuton loyalty to the chief as the incarnation of war lust, into a respect for law and the love of country and the century that followed his death was only the ever more vivid demonstration of the utter failure of the Teuton desire "to reëstablish the Roman name and state by Gothic vigor." So, because there was no real state rooted in the affections

of the people, no government which expressed the life of any large mass of men, there came into existence a substitute for government, a sort of bastard political system which was the child not of authority and consent, but of force and necessity—feudalism.

An effort was indeed begun in the tenth century to restore the Roman ideal in what came to be called the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation. But whatever else it did during its long existence, the German Empire did not resurrect the virtue of patriotism. It never succeeded in joining the forests where the legions of Varus had perished to the valley of the Tiber, whence they marched, so as to form what seemed to those who lived in it, a fatherland. Poets like Dante, poetical theorists like Marsilius, might write of the Empire, great warriors like the Ottos, the Henrys, the Fredericks, might fight for their dreams of it, but it never vitally affected the mass of its subjects so that they loved it and were willing to die for it. The phrases of Roman law and organization used by the Imperial chancelleries, covered a congeries of jealous and hostile feudal units held together by the mailed fist of a fighting overlord, whose title of Emperor was almost like an extra plume on his helmet.

Feudalism, which conquered the rather fantastic echoes of Roman feeling throughout all western Europe between the Baltic, the Alps and the Pyrenees, did not indeed remain based simply upon the material necessities which had brought it into being: the need of defense against savage violence and the attempts by communities to assure to their members at least the necessities of life. Nothing that has any historic reality, nothing that gives to masses of men more than a continuance of existence in time, can remain based upon purely material necessities and desires. Men living under feudal conditions began instinctively to form what is spoken of as the feudal system and to inform that feudal system with spiritual elements. Certain of the lower expressions of the human spirit which are more akin to

instinct than to reason or affection first appeared. The inhabitant of the feudal village felt that local attachment to the place where he had long eaten and slept and produced his kind, which we see in rudimentary form even in the wild beasts. This grew into local pride and became associated with some of the baser parts which still survive in patriotism, its jealousy and dislike of strangers and the desire to conquer and exploit them.

The higher side of the human soul began to express itself in the germs of what became the ideal of feudal loyalty between man and man. The Church, led by a force within her that at every crisis in her history strikes a sympathetic observer as greater than the sum of the intelligence and goodness of her officers and servants, began to twine about these growing nobler elements the golden threads of the teachings of Christ. Chivalry, a strange mixture of heathen strength, Roman virtue and the gentle manliness of Jesus of Nazareth, came into existence. The ten thousand political units which at the end of the tenth century existed between the Baltic and the Pyrenees were gradually combined, sometimes forcibly and sometimes by federation, into larger units. Local customs were amalgamated into general customs which became roughly codified and hardened into what was in effect a series of provincial laws. Great political ideas began to reappear, like the idea of freedom resting on authority; though still a sort of freedom which could be defended only by a reference to a particular bargain recorded in a written agreement or charter. Then we see the idea of a higher justice incarnate in the royal person, beginning to associate in the popular mind the sword of the king with the invisible sword of the justice of Almighty God, which reckless barons who saw in power nothing but privilege, defied. Then, compounded of loyalty, a sense of right, liberty guaranteed by authority, and the ideal of kingship as incarnated in a ruler like St. Louis, patriotism began to form in the hearts and in the minds of men.

In France, the results of this formation of the passion of patriotism found their clearest early expression in Jeanne d'Arc. But it also became conscious of itself in literature. The fifteenth century poet, Georges Chastellain, was an adherent of the Duke of Burgundy, a powerful vassal of the King of France, who resisted that weakening of feudal authority which was the necessary step in the formation of nationality. But nevertheless he begins his chronicle of the wars between France and Burgundy in these words: "I who am not English but French—who am neither Spaniard nor Italian but French, the servant of two Frenchmen, the one King, the other Duke, I have written of their deeds and disputes." And in later times, Clément Marot sang the passion of patriotism with a swing that prophesied the Marseillaise.[1]

Now in those dark days when the human race lacked both patriotism and the sense of devotion to law incarnate in the Empire, the Holy Roman Catholic Church, the one universal institution which survived the break-up of Roman unity and Roman civilization, was the carrier not only of religion but of all the arts and sciences which survived. As all the means of intercommunication, physical and spiritual, decayed, as all the bonds that had held the world together were loosed and Western Europe threatened to become a mere congeries of political units always on the verge of growing smaller, without common economic interests, without facility in recording ideas in language, without common hopes and even without common fears, it was the Church, and practically the Church alone, which still conserved the sense of a common Christendom on which rested the possibility of recovering or forming a common civilization. In the service of the Church there grew up a mode of expression in art common to large masses of people, a way of thinking and a system of education common to all Western Europe and a sense of common peril which enabled the fighting men of Europe to muster at the call of the head

[1] Marot. 177.

of the Church under the banner of the cross to march against their common enemy under the green banner of the Prophet. These incalculable services insensibly bound men's hearts to the Church as the one common heritage of that portion of humanity of which they were a part and made successive generations bow in awe before the ideal of the Papacy as the Vicegerent of Christ, the incarnate Justice and Truth of God upon earth: perhaps the most daring and majestic institutional ideal which has ever mastered the faith and the hopes of great masses of men.

Even when the line of powerful popes from Hildebrand to Innocent III, filled with a sense of the evils of the world they had left their monk's cells to save, was carried beyond the consciousness of being the incarnation of moral and spiritual authority to the claim of a supreme unquestionable right to depose or make emperors and kings, their idea was by no means rejected by the medieval world as a whole. The emperors fought the claim of the popes until the Papacy destroyed the great Imperial House of Hohenstaufen, the Kings of France refused to acknowledge that God had given the Pope the sword of temporal as well as spiritual power, but outside of France, Innocent III and his successors made good their claim that "Rome holds both the keys of Heaven and the government of earth." [1] The kings of Sicily, Portugal, Aragon, Castile, England, Sweden, Denmark, Bohemia, Poland, Hungary, Servia, Bosnia and Bulgaria, acknowledged that they held their crowns as feudal vassals of the Papacy. But power brought enormous wealth; for Rome became the center of the ecclesiastical patronage of the world and the highest court of appeal for a large part of the judicial procedure of the world. The accumulation of patronage and wealth brought corruption and by a reflex from the movement which had carried the Church into politics, politics crept into the Church. The attempt on the part of Boniface VIII at the beginning of the fourteenth century to master the crown of France

[1] Qtd. Luchaire, 28, ib. 31.

brought about the unexpected result that the crown of France mastered the college of cardinals, who elected the Popes. The Papacy left Rome and went to Avignon, where it remained for seventy years and the English soldiers in the Hundred Years War sang, "If the Pope is French, Jesus Christ is English." [1]

The international and universal genius which was inherent in the Papacy, soon began to struggle against this domination and finally brought the great institution back to Rome. But political and particularistic influence had become too firmly rooted in the college of cardinals to suffer a peaceful return to the old universalistic ideals of the Church. There followed the great schism which afterward became the triple-schism, in which three colleges of cardinals elected three separate lines of popes; each sending his rivals to hell and claiming to be the only true Vicegerent of God. It seemed as if the venerable institution would break to pieces of its own weight and perish. But the attachment of Europe to the old ideal of their forefathers was too deep and too strong to be destroyed even by this spectacle. The delegates of the whole medieval political world and of all medieval society, assembled in the Council of Constance at the beginning of the fifteenth century to save the papacy. They deposed or forced the resignation of all three of the popes, burnt at the stake the leaders of the Bohemian heretics for refusing to acknowledge the absolute authority of the Universal Church, and elected a new pope in a conclave where representatives of the nations sat with the Cardinals. After thus reaffirming their affection for the ideal of the papacy and their faith in the Church, they commissioned the Pope to make a detailed reform of the Church, reporting at intervals of ten years to a general Council of Christendom.

But the ancient zeal which could lift great ecclesiastics to the level of the magnificent ideal of the medieval papacy, could not be revived by legislation. The popes never will-

[1] Von Reumont (1), II, 721.

ingly called a council nor reported any general reform of the Church, so that the fifteenth century demonstrated the failure of the plan of Christendom assembled in its beginning at Constance to restore the great ideal of the Church. The new method of education of the Italian Renascence and the new view of life of the Humanist, raised to the throne of St. Peter some popes who were capable of understanding the Catholic spirit, but particularistic influences were again too strong for the power of a universal ideal. A cursory examination of the lives of the popes from Sixtus IV to Paul III (1471-1534) as they are recorded in the pages of a scholarly Catholic historian is enough to assure any observer that, as a whole, they thought more of their position as rulers of the States of the Church and princes of Italy than they did of their position as Vicegerents of Christ ruling the spiritual interests of Christendom. These pontiffs and many of their cardinals differed little except in dress from the princes of the Renascence among whom they lived. It seemed to great numbers of her sons north of the Alps that the papacy had become "Italianate." [1]

This second enormous distortion of that magnificent ideal of the papacy which had swayed the imagination and commanded the obedience of so many generations of men, did not take place without violent and continuous protest in all parts of Christendom. Men had not forgotten the example which their forefathers had set them in the Council of Constance. The failure of the abortive Council of Basle did not suppress this protest and from the time of Savonarola (who should not be reckoned among Protestants) until the actual assembly of the reforming Council of Trent in the middle of the sixteenth century, the idea of calling another general council to repeat what had been begun at Constance was always in the air. If such a council as the Council of Constance could have been assembled about the year 1500, it is possible that the schism between Teutonic

[1] "'Anglus Italizatus, demon incarnatus,' and so say French and Germans of their countrymen." Cal. F. 1566, p. 162.

and Latin Christianity might long have been postponed—perhaps altogether avoided. The papacy, by successfully resisting every suggestion for general reform in head and members undertaken by Christendom as a whole, brought into play a new historic force and, in a way, drove its harsher critics to another program of reform.

In the minds of a great number of the men of Europe national ideals had now completely taken the place, in every sphere except the ecclesiastical sphere, of universalistic ideals, and even there concordats gave to the Churches of Spain and France a large degree of national independence. When the fact that the world was confronted in the Church not with a theory but a situation, became too obvious for millions of men to blink it, the desire to restore the ancient mother to her purity was in many hearts destroyed by anger at abuses. Then the old consoling picture to which generations, in spite of every disappointment, had so long clung, of a Vicegerent of Christ who was the common father of all Christians, began in parts of Europe to be replaced by a passionate desire to revolt against one whom many had come to think of as a triple-tiaraed tyrant who spent the alms of the faithful in maintaining the worldly splendor of an Italian potentate. So the Catholic Reformation of which Erasmus and his friends dreamed, became swallowed up in a great schism—or rather in a great series of schisms by which the people of England, Scotland, some of the cantons of Switzerland, some of the provinces of the Netherlands, some States of the Empire, and the Scandinavian kingdoms established their own national churches. And a part of the people of Poland, and France, tried to do so.

In this world movement, the greatest revolutionary convulsion which had touched western Europe since the barbarian emigrations of the fifth century, the life of Catherine de' Medici, who had come over the Alps twenty-six years before an ignorant little girl, was, at the death of her husband, inextricably involved. For the faction of

schismatic and heretical reform had found one of its ablest and most energetic leaders in the person of a Frenchman, John Calvin, and the struggle between his followers and the partisans of orthodoxy for the control of the French Church was, for thirty years, to write the history of France in blood.

CHAPTER VIII

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE REFORMED CHURCH IN FRANCE

In order to understand the spread in France of what was sometimes spoken of as Protestantism, but more commonly called by its friends the "Reformed" and by its enemies the "Pretended Reformed" Religion, it is necessary to keep clearly in mind the three elements of the general movement of the Reformation of the sixteenth century suggested in the preceding chapter. These elements were not strange either to the family from which Catherine was sprung, or to the royal house into which she married. One of the most striking records of the consciousness among intelligent men of the corruption of the Church, is contained in the letter written by her great-grandfather Lorenzo to her great-uncle, when at the age of seventeen he went to Rome to take his place in the College of Cardinals. This lad, when he became Pope Leo X, was an energetic patron of the New Learning, continued the encouragement of the study of Greek which had been planted in Italy largely by the efforts of his family, and accepted the dedication of Ximenes' Complutensian Polyglot and the New Testament of Erasmus, which were the signs and symbols of the direction taken north of the Alps by the New Learning. Catherine's father-in-law, Francis I, had been sure of the corruption of the Church and talked of its reform: though he was never willing by giving up the concordat with Leo X, to lose the control of the patronage of the French Church which he, his son and grandson used so profanely, to put many benefices into the hands of soldiers, courtiers or women, who spent their revenues and neglected their duties. From the very beginning of his reign, Francis I was an intelligent patron of the Renascence. This appears not

only in his bringing from Italy artists and architects who in the building and decorating of his châteaux influenced the rise and development of the style of the French Renascence, but even more clearly in the way he advanced in France the distinctive cause of the New Learning as against the Old Learning. The controversy between these two methods of scholarship and instruction, which really represented two different ways of looking at life, became furious in the University of Paris soon after his accession to the throne. Francis I took strong and uncompromising sides with the New Learning. He appointed a learned Greek refugee from Constantinople his librarian and when Beda, Professor of Theology at the Sorbonne and leader of the adherents of the Old Learning, told him that "Hebrew and Greek would be the source of many heresies," [1] he could not turn the King from the project of founding at the University of Paris a Royal College of the New Learning. He never indeed felt able to spare the money for the magnificent building which he planned, but he did found chairs in Hebrew, in Greek and in Mathematics.

Soon after the establishment of these professorships, a movement which ended in revolt against the Roman authority was launched, almost simultaneously, by Martin Luther in Saxony and by Ulrich Zwingli in the Canton of Zurich of the Swiss Confederation. The writings of Luther spread very rapidly into other countries and in 1521 he was formally condemned as a heretic by the Sorbonne. The new doctrines found a ready reception in a circle of men, already somewhat critical of the ancient usages and doctrines of the Church, who gathered around Briçonnet, Bishop of Meaux, not far from Paris. This little group of incipient heretics soon attracted attention and by a very vigorous persecution was dispersed or compelled to recant. Several of their simpler disciples, persisting in the new doctrines, perished at the stake as heretics.

The King's favorite sister, Marguerite of Navarre, a

[1] Estienne II, 150.

woman of very active mind, was much interested in the New Learning, and inclined to protect the men whose new doctrines seemed to her so closely related to Humanism, against a persecution whose zealots were found in the ranks of the strongest advocates of the Old Learning. But on the return of Francis I from his captivity in Madrid after the battle of Pavia, the persecution became more severe. Heresy seemed to grow with persecution and in 1533 the Rector of the University of Paris, a certain Nicolas Cop, delivered an oration which plainly advocated the new doctrines of protest. This oration had been written by a young student, John Calvin, and both Cop and Calvin had to leave Paris.

The conflict between the orthodox supporters of papal authority and the defenders of the ecclesiastical revolts in various countries, which had now developed into doctrinal divergence, had become exceedingly bitter. Nevertheless, there were on both sides men who believed that it might be possible to proceed by way of a general council to such a reformation of the Church as might remove her worst abuses and concede such variations in practice, or such increased breadth in formulas of belief, as might satisfy all parties and effect a reconciliation. We have already seen that Francis I was strongly inclined by his political necessities to make friends with the Protestant princes of Germany, many of whom were not entirely committed to irreconcilable schism; and he accepted the suggestion of the learned and moderate Bishop of Paris that his brother, the Sieur de Langey, who was being sent by the King as an envoy to these Protestant princes, should make overtures to Melancthon, Luther's closest friend, for the formation of a program of reconciliation looking towards reunion. Melancthon prepared a tentative program which made a very favorable impression upon the mind of the King, and it seems probable that the persecution of heresy in France would have been much relaxed but for an action taken by some of the most violent heretics.

The posting of placards containing satires or invectives had been practised by both sides in this great religious controversy. A placard was now written by some of the French refugees and printed in Switzerland attacking the mass, which was the very center of Catholic ritual and, in many ways, the center of those Catholic doctrines which had been involved in the controversy with the new heresy. It called the "Pope and all his vermin of cardinals, bishops, monks and priests, sayers of masses, with all who consent thereunto, false prophets, damnable deceivers, apostates, wolves, false shepherds, idolaters, seducers, liars and execrable blasphemers, murderers of souls, renouncers of Jesus Christ, of his death and passion, false witnesses, traitors, thieves and robbers of the honor of God and more detestable than devils." It goes on to say of the doctrine of the mass: "Were there no other error than this in your infernal theology, you would well deserve the stake. Light then your fires to burn yourselves; not us, who refuse to believe in your idols, your new Gods and your new Christs." [1] Copies of this placard were posted through the streets of Paris, and one was affixed to the very door of the King's bed-chamber in the Château at Amboise. The wrath of the King was deep and it was shared by the all-powerful Constable. The persecution was rekindled with greater intensity than before and John Calvin, who had been living quietly in the provinces, now fled across the border and began that career which made him the absentee leader of the French Reformed Church.

He began it by writing the first draft of his "Institutions of the Christian Religion." It was preceded by an address to the King in defense of his persecuted subjects which is one of the monuments of early French prose. Near the end of his life, in the preface of another work, Calvin explained why he hastily finished this treatise in 1536, and also why he wrote for the Latin work, a preface in French. His purpose was to set forth, in definite theological form, the

[1] Chronique, ptd. 464.

system of doctrine of the French heretics. He believed that they were the victims of slander. The increase in the number of executions for heresy which had followed the affair of the placards, had aroused a very strong protest in the Protestant states of Germany and the Protestant cantons of Switzerland, and both of these places were the best sources in the world from which to draw mercenary soldiers. French armies had long contained contingents of Swiss, and Francis I hoped to include in his army regiments of reiters, or German cavalry, drawn to his standard by a common enmity to the House of Hapsburg, helped by the lure of French pay. The King, therefore, did not wish to break too sharply, either with the followers of Luther or of Zwingli, and he replied to their protests against the persecutions of the French heretics, that these people had not been put to death for holding what the Lutherans or the Zwinglians considered to be true, but because they were Anabaptists, who denied the validity of infant baptism and insisted that every adult believer must be rebaptized.

In order to understand how serious a charge this was in the eyes of the whole world, including the Protestants, we must briefly review the history of Anabaptism. Its adherents had been very pitilessly persecuted and repressed by Roman Catholics, Lutherans and Zwinglians alike, not simply or chiefly because of their teachings in regard to baptism, but largely because they thought that no magistrate had any right to interfere either with the liberty of conscience or the liberty of worship. The idea of religious liberty seemed to almost all churchmen, whether orthodox or schismatic, and to almost all writers upon politics, a very dangerous idea which would result in the destruction of the institutions of human society and a relapse into anarchy. The first leaders of the Anabaptists were, therefore, in the various countries of Europe, exterminated by the law. Their place was taken by other leaders who laid aside this doctrine, that the magistrates had no right to limit religious liberty, for another doctrine which seemed to the rulers of

the world even more dangerous. A set of men whose appearance [1] and actions indicate quite plainly that they lived near to the border line between sanity and insanity, because of the disordering power of a fixed idea, began to proclaim that the time foretold by the prophets for the establishment by God's elect of the kingdom of God on earth, was come and that they and their followers were the elect. Three months before the placards were posted, the world had seen a very striking illustration of the dangers to which the growing influence of these men might lead. The city of Münster, on the lower Rhine, which had revolted against its bishop and become Lutheran, was mastered by a band of these Anabaptists of the new school, refugees from the persecutions in Holland. They seized for the common use all the property of the city, forced polygamy upon all the women and accepted the claim of one of their number that he was sent to lay the foundation of the Kingdom of God upon earth. They sent out missionaries to advise peoples of the New Kingdom of God, and proclaim the extermination of the Godless who refused to obey this divinely inspired command. Some of the Protestants, including Luther himself, had been inclined to believe that the day of the Last Judgment was close at hand, but none of them felt that the coming Kingdom of God would take this form, and the affair of Münster struck a chill of fear and horror through the world. Nevertheless, the Kingdom of God in Münster maintained itself for two years, and was subdued only after a long siege, in which the troops of Roman Catholic and Lutheran German States joined.

To accuse the French Reformers just at this time of being Anabaptists was, therefore, to suggest in the eyes of all men of the day, that they were the enemies of God and men. Calvin, who was "lying hidden at Basle," thought it would be "cowardice and treachery" if he did not come to the defense of his brethren. "You yourself, sire," he wrote to the King, "can be a witness in regard to the great number

[1] Gresbeck's Journal, qtd. Bezold, 710.

of false calumnies by which our religion is every day defamed in your presence. That is to say, that the only outcome of our doctrine is to ruin all authorities and moral order, trouble the peace, abolish the laws and destroy the rights of society and private property. . . . Nevertheless, you do not hear more than the smallest portion of these calumnies. Because among the people there are circulated reports so horrible that, if they were true, the world would, with right, judge the disciples of such a doctrine worthy of a thousand stakes and a thousand gallows." [1]

This appeal had no effect upon the intention of Francis I, and the persecution continued throughout his reign.

On his accession to the throne Henry II, with that orthodox piety which was a marked trait of his character, continued the persecutions of his father with even greater zeal. He created in various parts of the kingdom courts with the special function of punishing heresy, which soon earned the popular name of "Burning Chambers." The list of those who perished at the stake indicates that, at first, the new doctrine and the new organization found their adherents chiefly among the smaller bourgeoisie. But, as time went on, they began to gain influence among the smaller country gentry, the more wealthy and influential commercial classes and the so-called noblesse de la robe: a sort of inferior nobility composed of those who practised the higher branches of the profession of the law and served in the more important offices of diplomacy, judicature and administration.

This change is plainly indicated by what is spoken of as the affair of the Rue St. Jacques, toward the end of the reign of Henry II in the autumn of 1557. Three or four hundred of the new religion were assembled at a private house in Paris for a secret celebration of the holy communion. The neighbors became aware of it; word was spread, and the whole quarter of the city rose in arms. The people barricaded the streets to prevent the escape of the heretics

[1] Preface, Psalms. Pref. Institutes.

until the police arrived. In this desperate situation between the prison and the stake and the stones and weapons of a mob, the assembly determined to force their way out; the men "who wore swords marching first;" which means that there were gentlemen among them. A large part of the assembly escaped but a number of the women remained in the house and were arrested by the police. The minister at the head of the secret parish church wrote that "the women who were taken prisoners were, with the exception of four or five, all ladies of great houses." One of the first to perish at the stake was the widow of a nobleman of considerable estate with friends at court who tried to purchase her life. The most influential of the friends who tried to save this young widow was Queen Catherine herself. The friends of the prisoners used every possible legal device to delay the process, but seven had gone to the stake in quick succession when the growth of the death roll was interrupted by the intervention of the Protestant cantons of Switzerland and the German Protestant princes. The King needed these allies too much in his foreign policy to break with them and the lives of the rest of the prisoners were spared.[1]

Not long after this time, we know that the new doctrine and the new organization were beginning to appeal to some of the higher nobility of France. In particular, they attracted the favorable attention of the great house of Bourbon, princes of the blood, and of the house of Châtillon, the cadet branch of the house of Montmorency. In the spring of 1558, the King of Navarre and a number of his gentlemen appeared publicly in Paris at a large assembly which met for the purpose of singing the psalms in the French translation of Clement Marot: an action which, for reasons not perfectly clear, was interpreted as hostile to the orthodox doctrines and the ancient ecclesiastical institution. The attention of the King had been called already to the heretical sentiments of one of the chief officers of his army, d'Andelot, Captain General of French Infantry. D'Andelot,

[1] Hist. Ecc., 139, 141.

taken prisoner at the surrender of Saint Quentin, had adopted the heretic standpoint in the Spanish prison. After he came back to France, he not only had preaching on his own French estate and through the towns of Brittany and the Loire, but he openly attended great meetings for the new worship held just outside the walls of Paris every night by five or six thousand persons. The King sent for d'Andelot and had with him a stormy interview. On his way out of the palace, the Captain General was arrested and thrown into prison. He could get released only by making some sort of formal submission which, although it included no explicit abjuration of his own belief, always seemed to him afterward a great failure in courage.

In spite of all these attempts by Catherine's husband to crush heresy, it continued to spread, and during the twelve years of his reign France was covered (more thickly in some provinces than in others) with a network of churches, secret and illegal, organized on a model drafted by John Calvin, who had taken refuge in the city of Geneva, whence he sent out his scholars to act as missionaries and pastors. It must not be supposed that these new churches were standing for freedom of worship or even for freedom of conscience. They were standing for the truth as they held it and it seemed just as clear to them as it did to the King, that it was the duty of church and state to repress false doctrines. For instance, there was a secret church in the city of Beaugency whose members were of course all in danger of the stake. One of them announced the idea that the magistrates had no right to punish heresy. He was called before a meeting of the church consistory, which included three pastors, and his error was shown him by such "strong reasons founded on the word of God" that he withdrew it and signed a statement that it was the Christian duty of the magistrates to suppress obstinate heresy, by force. Thus believing that they stood for truth which scorned toleration and demanded the right of way as the word of God and further encouraged by the patronage of a

considerable number of the classes who represented the idea of authority and the profession of arms, the minds of many of the members of the French Reformed churches began to turn from the early idea of mere passive resistance which would make the blood of the martyrs the seed of the Church. But for some time their idea was strenuously opposed, and on the whole with success, by their intellectual leader, John Calvin. He was intensely conscious of the cruel wrongs suffered by his fellow believers, but his extremely logical mind had not yet found for their right to defend by arms the liberty of proclaiming the word of God, a statement intolerable to his temperament dominated by an intense love of law.

Henry II in the latter part of his life, had watched with growing alarm this increase of heresy in spite of all his efforts to suppress it and his alarm had been an additional reason for making peace with the hereditary enemy of his house in order to devote himself to his own kingdom. This is no mere conjecture founded on what followed the Peace of Cateau-Cambrésis. On the 26th of June, 1559, the Duke of Alva wrote to Philip II a letter as follows: "The Constable came to talk with me and said the King sent him to thank me many times because I had offered, on the part of your Majesty, all the help he wanted for reformation and punishment in matters of religion in this Kingdom, in which every day he saw more harm being done. . . . He said Geneva was the sewer of all this wickedness, whither his vassals and those of your Majesty who were infected, fled and from there sent emissaries to make trouble in your Majesty's realm and in his—that it would be well that some agreement should be made between your Majesty and him to remove Geneva out of the world." [1]

The King, who had sought peace to suppress heresy, seems to have become fully aware that this new organization was consolidating and increasing its powers of resistance. He found it undesirable and perhaps dangerous to

[1] A. N. K. 1492 (43).

continue the attacks, which he began in the case of d'Andelot, upon that very free class which was called the nobility of the sword, because he must always depend on them for the officers of his army. He determined, therefore, to carry out his repression in the class of the noblesse de la robe. The chief court of the kingdom was the Parlement of Paris and it was reported to him that a large number of the councillors of the court were at least so far favorable to the new opinions and organization that they were trying to check by every possible means the repression of the secret Reformed church by force. This report seems to have been brought to the King by the Cardinal of Lorraine, who, in a general meeting of the entire Parlement, accused the chief president and the bulk of the councillors of being favorers of heresy. "You are the reason," he said, "why not only Poitiers but all Poictou, even to the country of Bordeaux, Toulouse, Provence and France in general, is completely filled with this vermin which increases and swarms because it puts its trust in you."

It was an ancient custom of the court to call three or four times a year a meeting to consider the "morals and conversation" of its members. Such a meeting had the name of mercurial.[1] The Procurator General of the King now proposed a mercurial for the especial purpose of asking the opinion of the councillors in regard to religion. The meeting was opened by the King, attended by all the chief functionaries of church and state, most of whom were members of the Parlement in the sense that they had the right to be present at any of its full assemblies. Each of the councillors and presidents, that is to say, the professional members of the court to whom its real work was usually left, was asked in turn to declare his opinion upon the matter of the enforcing of the royal edict in regard to religion. The English Ambassador reported to Queen Elizabeth that, so far as he could learn, "out of the one hundred and twenty presidents and councillors at the court there were only

[1] Condé I, 218.

fourteen councillors and one president who were really in favor of that policy of very strict repression which had been put into the King's mind by the influence of the Cardinal of Lorraine; the rest of the court was against the policy of the Cardinal." [1] This is doubtless an exaggeration of the amount of sympathy for the Reformed church which existed in the highest court of France, but it is probably true, as the Ambassador suggests, that the forcible resistance to agents of persecution and the tumultuous interruption of orthodox preachers who attacked the doctrines of the reform, taking place already in many places in France, were encouraged not only by the knowledge that some of the chief nobles were patrons of the new organization, but also by the knowledge that it had sympathizers not willing to be too hard upon it, in the chief court of the Kingdom.

A large number of the councillors, when asked to express their opinion on the religious situation, gave ambiguous replies, a considerable number of them were strongly in favor of orthodoxy, but some of them spoke so openly in favor of the new doctrines and denounced so strongly the abuses in the Church, that the King ordered the Constable to arrest two of them on the spot, and sent his guards after the close of the meeting to arrest six others. Three of them escaped by flight, but five were committed to the Bastille. After an interrogatory by an ecclesiastical commission, the ablest and the boldest of these men, du Bourg, of the cadet branch of a wealthy and distinguished family of Languedoc, was officially declared a heretic and handed over to the law for punishment.[2] The learned du Bourg, while he did not in the least attempt to conceal his belief, used every resource of the law in his own defense and the struggle between him and the authorities of church and state was watched with the deepest and most excited attention by the entire secret Reformed church of France and all its patrons and friends both within and without the kingdom. Just at this critical

[1] Forbes, 126. Paris, 13 June, 1559.
[2] De la Place Ed., 1565, pp. 19, 29.

point, Henry II died, leaving the struggle with heresy and schism to his feeble son, Francis II.

The exact strength of the Reformed church after forty years of propaganda and persecution cannot be accurately estimated. Until toward the close of the reign of Henry II, the new doctrine and the new organization made comparatively little progress except among the humbler classes of the population. It seemed, however, even at this time, to appeal strongly to some students of the universities and to a few of the higher classes because of a certain air of intellectual freedom about it and because of its early close connection with the movement of the New Learning. It is worthy of remark that in the list of martyrs given in the Book of Martyrs during the forty years from 1515 to 1555 there appear the names of only three nobles and two of the agricultural peasants. This is not conclusive, because one class may have been too humble to attract attention and the other too powerful to be subject to punishment, until the whole power of the state was turned in the direction of persecution. But there are other indications that, just at the end of the reign of Henry II, large numbers of the nobles of all ranks accepted the new doctrine or joined the new secret organization. This was apparent to the Spanish Ambassador, who wrote, "The flower of the nation is the most spoiled. The nobility especially has taken the liberty they call evangelic." [1]

Some things imply that not all of these new adherents to the new Church were moved by purely religious considerations. A wave of opposition to the secular influence of the clergy had been for some time sweeping over all Europe. Their wealth and their political and judicial power had for more than a generation excited great dislike among the nobles and burghers in many countries. The same motives which made many of the nobles of England, Scotland and the German States ready to support schism without any particular religious or intellectual interest in heresy, were

[1] Haton I, 61, Crespin A. N. K. ctd. Mignet Jour. des Savants, July, 1857.

plainly operative among the nobles of France. But when all this has been said, and it has been pointed out over and over again by the more modern writers upon the history of the civil wars about religion in France, it still remains true that the prevailing motive among the adherents and defenders of the French Reform was the religious motive. The men who, at the close of the reign of Henry II, were getting ready to become the leading champions of the new doctrine and organization, did not any of them die at the stake. But there is no reason to accept as gospel the sneer of their fierce enemy, Monluc, about "Great nobles not getting themselves burnt very often for the word of God." [1] They fell on the battlefield, many of them were assassinated, but this does not prove they would not have gone to the stake as the country gentleman du Bourg, nephew of a chancellor of France finally did—if death had met them that way.

[1] Monluc, III, 140.

CHAPTER IX

UNDER THE THUMB OF THE GUISE—THE CONSPIRACY OF AMBOISE AND THE HUGUENOTS

The new King was fifteen years and six months old and therefore according to the ancient custom of France eighteen months past the age when a King might be crowned and rule for himself, but for Francis II to rule actually the kingdom of France in such a crisis was impossible. He was a boy of small intellectual ability, feeble health and unstable nervous equilibrium, immoderately given to violent exercise, and very fond of the pretty little girl who was his wife. From the first he was disposed to leave the business of state entirely in the hands of her uncles, the Cardinal of Lorraine and the Duke of Guise. This freed him as much as possible from the work of governing, for which he had neither ability nor inclination, and enabled him to devote nearly as much time as he chose to hunting and other sports. If perchance he developed a will of his own, his virile little Queen was always able to control him and she seems to have trusted completely to her uncles. The situation is briefly sketched by the English Ambassador a few days after the death of Catherine's husband and the accession of her oldest son. "The House of Guise now ruleth, with whom I am in very small grace, and the Queen of Scotland, who is a great doer here, and taketh all upon her, hath so small an opinion of me as I shall be able to do small service withal, therefore it may like you to use means for my revocation. . . . The French King hath already given the Constable to understand that the Cardinal of Lorraine and the Duke of Guise will manage his whole affairs." And the same report of the absolute control of all things by the Cardinal of Lorraine and the Duke of Guise is made by

everybody who had opportunity to know the French court during the short and feeble life of Francis II. The Tuscan Ambassador wrote home, "The Cardinal of Lorraine is Pope and King in France." [1]

How the Queen Dowager Catherine really felt about this complete supremacy of the faction of the Guise with whom, although she disliked them, she had of late years been acting, we do not know. Every outward honor was shown her, the new King, her son, even insisting upon waiting upon her at table, and there was a private staircase leading from her room to the King's room. Financially she was more than independent, for the usual allowance of 100,000 francs for a Queen Dowager was made 300,000. The woman for whom Catherine had so long concealed her hate was humiliated. "The King said today to Madame Valentinois that because of the evil influence she had exerted over the King, his father, she merited great punishment, but that in his royal mercy he did not want to cause her more inconvenience. Nevertheless she must restore all the jewels which the King had given to her." In addition, she was compelled to retire from court.[2]

The Guise rivalled their nephew and niece in the great outward honor which they paid to the Queen Dowager. They were accustomed to say of anything of which explanation was asked, that "if it pleased the Queen Mother to do so and so, they also were pleased, because the King cannot and ought not, ever to depart from the wishes of the Queen Mother." It was even arranged that in all important public acts this formula was to be used at the beginning: "This being the good pleasure of the Queen, my Mother and Lady, I also approving the things which are in accord with her advice, I am content, and I command that, etc." But in spite of this outward honor paid to Catherine it is quite evident from the reports of the ambassadors and her own correspondence, that, although she was present at all the

[1] Forbes I, 160, 166, Neg. Tosc. III, 404.
[2] Cal. Ven. 1560, pp. 109, 127, Baschet 494.

councils of state, the field of her activity was very limited and her influence in important matters very small.[1]

We have only twenty-one letters of hers written during the six months after the death of her husband. Four of these show that she did not abandon her old habit of trying to use her influence in every way in order to help her old servitors and friends. The most important of these is a letter to the Duke of Florence in regard to the papal election:

"I beg you, as affectionately as I can, my cousin, on account of the good influence which I know you have with several of the cardinals of the Holy College, to be willing to aid, so far as you can, my cousin, the Cardinal of Ferrara to become Pope, because, beside the fact that he is at present so closely allied to you as he is, and that you may expect all possible help . . . towards the greatness of your house from him, you are assured that you could not do, at the present moment, any greater or more agreeable pleasure to me than this, and also to the King, my son. Otherwise, and in case this shall not be possible, I beg you again to make every effort that you can toward the same end in favor of my cousin, the Cardinal of Tournon . . . and I believe that there cannot be found in the Holy College any personage who is better adapted to acquit himself of the duties of that position in a more holy manner." [2]

This effort of Catherine's was hopeless from the start. The Spanish party had twice as many votes in the conclave as the French party and by the beginning of November the election of Ferrara was manifestly impossible. The Bishop of Viterbo wrote to Catherine asking her support for the candidacy of the Cardinal de' Medici, "because all of the other candidates who are more desired by the King, your son, are meeting . . . probably insuperable difficulties." [3]

About two months later Catherine received the following letter from the Cardinal of Sens:

[1] Cal. Ven. 113, Baschet 496.
[2] Letts. I, 124.
[3] Neg. François II, 137.

"MADAME:—

"You will hear by the letter which the Cardinal of Guise is writing you, the creation of a Pope, and how all things took place which concern the affairs of the King. This will prevent me from writing any further to you about it in the present letter, only I wish to inform you, madame, that you alone are the reason why he is Pope; . . . which causes me to believe that the affairs of the King and of his subjects and your own affairs will have a better chance, and that in everything which depends upon the will of our Holy Father, you will have a large part and power, and though the two predecessors of this Pope may have failed in like matters and have not given due consideration to them, it appears to me that this one will not follow the mistakes of the others, because he is a very estimable man." [1]

This letter is a good specimen of the kind of flattery to which Catherine was subject, for as a matter of fact, Medici, who was in no way related to her,[2] was on the King of Spain's list as an alternate candidate, and had been all along the real candidate of the Duke of Florence. The French party had finally concurred in his election only because they were wearied out by four months' discussion, and despaired of electing any one of the men they really wanted.

If Catherine resented an arrangement of the French government, which, while paying every outward demonstration of respect, left her no real power except the exercise of personal influence in small matters of patronage, she gave no sign of it. But there were people in France whose resentment over the power and the policy of the house of Guise was more dangerous. These opponents of the Guise may be classified under three heads: first, the house of Bourbon, comprising all the princes of the blood royal not in the direct line, together with all their retainers; second, the house of Montmorency and a large number of the nobility, who regarded that house as the leading family of France and looked upon the Guise as foreigners and interlopers; third, the secret and illegal Reformed churches, now organized into a national synod. Each of these discontented

[1] Neg. François II, 208.
[2] Müller, Th., 228, N. 2.

parties endeavored to get the help or the support of Catherine.

Not long after the death of the King the Constable had a private interview with the Queen Mother, in which he urged her to keep the organization of the state very much as it was, in order, during the youth of the King, not to offend any of the princes of the blood, and offered to use the authority which belonged to him, to help her in this task. The story has come down to us, through one of the two men with a chance to know something of the inside of things, who have written the history of the reign of Francis II, that this interview between the Queen Mother and the Constable was an exceedingly stormy one, because Catherine accused the Constable of having said during her husband's life "that no one of her husband's children looked like him except his natural daughter Diana, and added that if she did simple justice, she would punish him now by having his head cut off." The pages of this chronicler are filled with piquant anecdotes of the sort and therefore he has been very extensively quoted by all who have written about the reign of Francis II. But he is so intensely partisan in defense of the party of opposition and so hostile to the House of Guise, that he took without question many tales, improbable in themselves, and either omitted or denied by other sources. He is not only demonstrably inaccurate, but deeply prejudiced and much less reliance ought to be put upon him in the future by writers who are not willing to sacrifice truth to picturesqueness. This story is unknown to at least two other witnesses who had good means of knowing about it, and the English Ambassador reports that Catherine parted most graciously with her husband's old friend. His account is borne out by three affectionate letters which Catherine wrote to the Constable within four months of the time this stormy interview is supposed to have taken place. The first, written within a few weeks, ends: "I shall be very glad when I shall have some news of you, which I pray God may be as good as are hoped for

by your gossip and friend, Caterine." But if Catherine did not quarrel with the Constable, the King made it plain that he had no use for his services. The Constable retired to his country place at Chantilly and remained for months in seclusion, while his adherents were one by one quietly ousted from their positions in administration.[1]

According to ancient custom, Anthony of Bourbon, first prince of the blood, now King of Navarre through his recent marriage to the heiress of that little kingdom on the southern border of France, would have had chief place in the government during the minority of a king. He had not, however, been in any hurry to come up to court from the south, where he held in the two great provinces of Guienne and Gascony the office of governor, an office filled in each of the provinces of France by the King, but tending to become hereditary and bringing to its holders a large measure of almost independent authority and power. It was three weeks after the death of the King before he arrived at the town of Vendôme, several days' journey from Paris. There he was met by his brothers, the Cardinal of Bourbon and the Prince of Condé, and his cousins, the Duke of Montpensier and the Prince de la Roche sur Yon. The object of this conference of all the members of the House of Bourbon was to form plans for demanding their due share in the government and the lessening of the overwhelming power of the Guise. They proposed to demand that the Constable, head of the House of Montmorency, be restored to the active exercise of all his offices, which were now managed by the Duke of Guise. The Constable was represented at the meeting by his secretary, and his nephew of the House of Châtillon, the Admiral of France. His brother, d'Andelot, Captain General of the French Infantry, had already consulted with the younger Bourbons. The conference decided to begin this plan by demanding from the Queen Mother and the King that the private seal of the

[1] Hist. attributed to Regnier de la Planche. Cal. Ven. 110, 121; Letts. I, 125.

King should be put in the hands of the King of Navarre, as long as His Majesty remained so young. Catherine heard of this plan of the Bourbons to appeal to her to help them weaken the power of the Guise, and she sent for the Prince de la Roche sur Yon. "In gentle language she complained to him of his wishing to turn the kingdom upside down and rebel with the others, to the injury of the King, her son, who on account of his tender age deserves support and not opposition from his kinsfolk of the blood royal, adding that the past misfortunes of France and this last one of the King's death were more than sufficient without now adding a civil war which would never end, and with many tears, crying almost the whole time, she expostulated thus with the Prince."

Two weeks later the King of Navarre, accompanied by all the princes of the blood, arrived at Paris. He was met by the King with great ceremony and greeted by the Duke of Guise and the Cardinal of Lorraine with the utmost respect. It is evident, however, that the Bourbons soon persuaded themselves, or else were persuaded by the Queen Mother, not to force their demand for a share in the government and soon after the coronation of the King, all the members of the family withdrew, on various pretexts, from court.[1]

The third element of discontent was the illegal secret Reformed churches, upon whom the hand of the government was laid more heavily than ever. Eighty-eight heretics had been burned at the stake during the twelve years' reign of Henry II. Two hundred perished at the stake in a few months of the rule of Francis II. As it became evident that this repression was not destroying or even checking the growth of the illegal churches, the King issued, in the month of November, three edicts, ordering the destruction of any house in which an illegal assembly was held, the execution of any person attending one, and a free pardon and reward for informers. The members of

[1] Cal. Ven. 115, 121; Forbes 192.

the Reformed church thought Catherine not unfriendly to their cause. For instance, the secretaries of the English Embassy wrote to Elizabeth early in December: "The two queens have daily a sermon made before them in the chapel at the court or in their dining chamber by a friar, who can good skill, which some think is done by the Cardinal of Lorraine's means to keep in the Queen Mother, who is noted rather to be a Protestant than otherwise." It was this reputation that brought her the appeal to which she wrote the following reply, in November, 1559:

"To the Magistrates of the City of Metz:

"Gentlemen: I have seen the letter which you wrote to me the fifth of this month, containing the request which you make to supersede the execution of the letters which the King, my son, has written to you in the matter of religion, in which I would gladly have employed myself . . . except for the fact that knowing how very pernicious and dangerous a difference of religion is in a city . . . I am not able to give you any better counsel in this matter except to obey the letter which the King, my said master and son, has written to you on the subject, as a thing which belongs to the honor of God and which will aid in the prosperity and repose of your city."[1]

Whatever inclination in favor of the Reform Catherine may have had was not helped by a letter which was written to her about this time in favor of du Bourg, whose trial had been dragging along ever since the death of the King; constantly impeded by the efforts of his friends and by his own skill as a lawyer. It said that they had been trusting to her promise to end the process against du Bourg, but it was now evident that his enemies intended to take his life. She ought to be assured that "God would not leave such an iniquity as this unpunished. . . . God had commenced by the punishment of the late King . . . and the witness and the testimony of His judgment would again be so manifest that it could not be by any means disguised or hidden." The procedure against du Bourg was so strange in the

[1] Letts. I, Int., p. 61. Condé I, 6. Forbes, 274. Hist. Ecc., I, 241. Letts. I, 128.

eyes of everybody that if anything further was attempted against him and the other Christians (eighteen heretics had been burnt in Paris during October) there would be the greatest danger of trouble and revolution. Not that revolution would come from those who under their ministry had embraced the Reformation of the Gospel, because she could expect from them every sort of obedience, but because there were a great number of others, a hundred-fold as many, who, knowing only the abuses of the Pope, and not having yet submitted themselves to ecclesiastical discipline, could not suffer persecution. Of this fact they wished to warn her in order that if any mischief came she could not think that it proceeded from them. Catherine was not at all a timid woman, although some superficial observers were sometimes inclined to think that she was. This letter enraged rather than frightened her and she is reported to have said: "Well, they are threatening me, thinking to frighten me, but they haven't yet got as far as they think."

A few days before Christmas du Bourg was burned in front of the Hôtel de Ville, glorying over his death in the cause of Christ. This severity, however, did not produce the desired effect. The Venetian Ambassador reports in December: "Religion is in great disorder and has need of more than ordinary care and remedy, as from all quarters fresh disturbances are heard of daily. Although in Paris and other cities not a week passes without many persons being burned alive, and a yet greater number being imprisoned, the contagion nevertheless does not cease, but spreads more and more daily." Those who preferred the new religion were getting very unwilling to stand quietly by and see their friends led to the slaughter. Arrested heretics on their way to trial were not infrequently stopped by bands of armed men and taken out of the hands of the officers of the law. Near the end of December a sergeant of the official charged with the investigation of the crime of heresy was murdered near the Castle of Chantilly, where

the court was, and the letters he was carrying to the Cardinal of Lorraine taken from the body.[1]

For a long time it had been evident to a shrewd outsider that the differences of opinion about religion in France and the quarrels among the nobles might easily combine to produce very serious trouble, and the neighbors of France had already planned to get their advantage out of this trouble when it began. The day after the death of Henry II the Duke of Alva wrote to Philip II from Paris that one of his objects ought to be to favor the Catholics of the realm: "thus while doing service to God, your Majesty can hold such a party in this realm that, whenever it seems best to you, you can change the government." The English Ambassador reports, on the 25th of August, 1559, that he had met the King of Navarre at eleven o'clock at night three leagues outside of Paris. He assured him that the Queen of England was ready to join herself in such alliance and friendship with him that the true religion might be properly advanced, and its enemies could not gain any advantage neither against God nor against His cause, nor against His ministers. The King of Navarre said there was no doubt but that God meant to serve Himself by the Queen of England, and . . . he rejoiced that he had so good a colleague and so good a cause. The Ambassador, refusing an escort for his dangerous journey, lest the secret of this interview might be discovered, then returned home. Each of these monarchs had a special reason of state for keeping in close alliance with a faction in France. Philip II feared lest the heresy spreading in the Netherlands should be strengthened by contagion from France and Elizabeth was alarmed lest the Guise should use the power of France to back the pretensions of their niece, the young Queen, who served dinner to the English Ambassador on plate engraved with the quartered arms of England, Scotland and France.[2]

[1] Barthelemy, 35; de la Planche, p. 30, sup. by Languet, qtd. Letts. I, Int. 69; Cal. Vcn., 135; Condé I, 319; Forbes I, 261.

[2] A. N. K. 1492 f. 49 Cal. F.

Although the Constable quietly withdrew from court and apparently allowed his power to be taken from him without a struggle, it is evident that the Guise came dangerously near to pushing the Montmorency too far. The Constable had held the office of Grand Master of France for thirty-three years, but the Duke of Guise, who had inherited from his father the position of Chief Huntsman and had taken away from the Duke of Longueville the position of Grand Chamberlain, wished to add a third post to his honor and power, so he now took the office of Grand Master. The result was a situation which compelled Catherine to assume the rôle of pacifier. She wrote a letter which shows great fear of the outbreak of civil war between the factions of Guise and Montmorency:

"To Marshal Montmorency, My Cousin:

"Your wife being on her way home, entirely instructed in regard to the will of the King, my son, I want to take this occasion to write this word in addition to what I have told your wife to tell you from me; . . . that you ought to carry out the will of the King on this occasion. . . . Assuring myself that if you will do what is in your power, the good which we expect from this arrangement will result. I beg you, do this great service to yourself and to all of us, and think that you are doing it for the King, your good master, who is dead, my husband, and for your country. It is his son, who is his true image in body, in spirit and in goodness. You will never be deceived in such an action and so much loved and with so much occasion, having done him so great a service, that it is not possible to fear that you will ever lose his good graces, besides the fact that, in addition, it is his natural disposition to love you. If you have any trust in me, as one who has always shown to you and to your house my good will, believe me this time, and if you are deceived in it, keep this letter in order to denounce me as the most unhappy and miserable, I will not say Queen or Princess, but creature, whom God has ever created, and give yourself and all your house that contentment of having been the cause of the restoration of this poor kingdom, and leave this beautiful memory of yourself to posterity, and not the memory of having helped to ruin it. I pray God to give you the grace to resolve so wisely that the King, the kingdom and all its sub-

jects will be under obligations to you. From Blois, the Third of January, 1560. Your good cousin, CATERINE." [1]

Besides the threatening protests of the heretic churches and the sporadic resistance of those who favored the martyrs, there were other and even more dangerous signs of discontent. At the end of October there had appeared a pamphlet making a very serious attack upon the government as it was established in the Queen Mother with the advice of the Cardinal of Lorraine and the Duke of Guise. It said that such an arrangement was contrary to the ancient customs and laws of France which excluded women from the government and put the regency for a minor King in the hands of the princes of the blood royal, bitterly attacked the Guise and demanded the assembly of the Estates General.[2]

Protests and attacks upon the house of Guise less learned and more popular followed in ever increasing number. One quite widely circulated seems to be a doggerel poem in praise of the two brothers, but if cut perpendicularly at right angles not far from the beginning of the lines, it produces a savage attack upon them. It cannot be translated, but it may be reproduced with a reasonable degree of exactness, as follows:

"Oh lucky chance, nay, gift of God's own hand
Which gives to France, our well-loved native land,
Cardinal Lorraine, who from heresies' maw
The source of pain to all who love God's law,
The deadly blight of truth, the Church would save:
Of truth and right the hope, though Satan rave
With crafty might. Firm, just and brave,
His brother Guise, with loyal, righteous hand,
Longs to seize whoe'er resists the King, and
Everything in sight from stain of crime would lave.
Or foul or fair, they miss no plot though deep.

[1] Decrue (2), p. 264, Forbes I, 274, Letts. I, 130.
[2] De Thou, II, 693; La Place, 42.

By night or day, from their vigilant eye
Nothing gets away. The craftiest hide no lie
From this wise pair. These guardians never sleep.
They never spare themselves, from harm to keep
The smallest thing when traitors rouse vile strife
To gain their hope. And France with truth can say:
One to be Pope the Crown would not betray,
The other the King would serve with his own life."

In addition to all these general hatreds, the Guise had drawn upon themselves the hatred of a class small but very dangerous—the professional soldiers or captains of the regular regiments of the army. They had been dismissed without a settlement after the Peace of Cateau-Cambrésis and had assembled at court to try to collect their back pay. They had been summarily sent away by the Cardinal of Lorraine and many of them left swearing vengeance.[1]

These men, together with some of the nobility, of good lineage, though not of the highest rank, organized a widespread conspiracy, which was given final form in a meeting held in the city of Nantes on the first of February, 1560. The active leader was a certain nobleman of ancient lineage, the Seigneur de la Renaudie, who, after losing a process at law with the chief clerk of the Parlement of Paris, was condemned to prison for having produced in the process forged documents: "a thing," says the contemporary historian de Thou, "which happens often enough in this sort of affair." He escaped from prison by the help of the Duke of Guise, then the Comte de Joinville, and fled to Geneva, where he married a French lady. During his banishment, his brother-in-law, who had been sent by the King of Navarre as an emissary to the Protestant centers of Germany, had been secretly hung after torture in the garret of the Château of Vincennes, and "buried in the ditch in a place overgrown with weeds." La Renaudie, who at-

[1] Bouillé II, 28. Brant., Cal. Ven., 159; Paillard qtd. Span. Amb. 7.

tributed his death to the Cardinal of Lorraine and the Duke of Guise, had vengeance added to his other motives for revolt. Just before the death of Henry II he obtained letters of pardon with restoration of all his estates and permission to live according to his conscience providing he did not preach.[1]

The objects of the conspiracy La Renaudie organized were first and above all to remove the Cardinal of Lorraine and the Duke of Guise from power (probably to execute them on a charge of treason)—to put the control of the government where custom required that it should be during a royal minority, in the hands of the princes of the blood, to restore the Constable to the exercise of all his offices—to stop the persecution of the Reformed religion—and to assemble the Estates General. It was not backed by any of the great nobles except perhaps, secretly, by the Prince of Condé. None of the Montmorency had anything to do with it. It had only the partial approval of the Reformed church. Calvin himself expressed his very strong disapproval of it. "If," he wrote, "a single drop of blood is shed, rivers of it will flow. . . . If the princes of the blood should demand for the common good to be supported in their good right, and if the court of Parlement, in the absence of the Estates General, would join themselves to them, it might then be permissible for all good subjects to maintain them in arms." Calvin had a very poor opinion of La Renaudie, and when the latter dared to assume that he had his sanction, sent for him, violently reproached him, and finally preached a sermon against him. Nevertheless, a number of those who entered into this conspiracy considered themselves to be fighting in the cause of God.

News of the conspiracy was brought to the Cardinal of Lorraine within two weeks of its formation. A Protestant prince who was his friend sent him word from Germany and a warning came to him from the Bishop of Arras in the Netherlands. An order was sent in the middle of March

[1] De Thou II, 754. Read 103.

to the French Ambassador in Switzerland to shadow La Renaudie that he might be arrested as soon as he crossed the border of France. But he had then been in France at least three weeks. A full suggestion of the danger in which he stood was brought to the Cardinal by a Protestant lawyer from Paris with whom la Renaudie had taken lodgings. This man, moved either by his fears or his conscience, put the government on its guard. By the fourth of March, 1560, the news that something dangerous was afoot became generally known and the court was very uneasy.[1]

They had already made plans to spend some weeks on a hunting trip among the châteaux of the Loire. Afterward they intended to make the journey to Toulouse by way of Bordeaux and to spend the following winter in Provence and Languedoc. The news made them take refuge in the defensible château of Amboise. Alarming dispatches continued to come in. For instance, on the thirteenth of March they heard that one of the royal officers, acting on secret information, captured, not far from Tours, two bands of armed men who had with them ten trunks filled with pistols. The carrying of all firearms had months before been strictly prohibited by royal proclamation, which also prohibited the wearing of long mantles, broad sleeves and big boots in which pistols might be concealed.[2]

The Cardinal of Lorraine, very much worried by the situation, began to appeal to the influence and the help of Catherine. This change of attitude is very evident from the correspondence of the English Ambassador. Previous to the time when the Guise became certain of this conspiracy, his letters contain but little reference to Catherine, but from that time on it is evident that attention is paid to her opinion in all matters of state. Her advice was that the younger members of the house of Montmorency, Admiral Coligny and his brother d'Andelot, Captain Gen-

[1] Mignet. Jour. des Savants, July, 1857; ib. qtd. A. N. K. Cal. Vcn. 153, Forbes I, 355.

[2] Cal. Vcn. 156, Paillard, 28, qtd. Arch. Brussels.

eral of the French Infantry, should be called to court. Coligny came and advised the Queen to issue at once an edict declaring entire liberty of conscience until time could be had for the assembly of a general council for the reform of the Church. This advice was accepted not only by Catherine, but by the Guise. An edict was issued in which "the King, by the advice of his honored mother and his council and not wishing that the first year of his reign should seem to posterity bloody and full of the death of our poor subjects however much they may have deserved death," ordered the release of all people arrested for the sake of religion. The edict excepted from pardon all preachers of heresy and called upon all loyal subjects of the King to live in the future as good Catholics.[1]

This of course was not what Coligny had advised and if it had been, the conspirators had probably gone too far now to be willing to give up their plans. At all events, small bodies of armed men continued to converge from different points upon the town and castle of Amboise. They were cut off and captured by the princes, nobles and gentlemen of the court and, on the nineteenth of March, 1560, la Renaudie himself was killed in a skirmish in the woods not far from Amboise. The utmost severity was used against the prisoners. One day, for instance, four men were hanged in the morning and in the evening nine more were hanged, some from the gates, some upon specially erected gallows, some from the window-casings of the château. Bunches of prisoners were tied up in sacks or bound together to long poles and cast into the river. About fifty were drowned in this way. In all it is estimated by foreign observers that some seventy-five were executed. A few noblemen of greater importance were beheaded.[2]

Many of the soldiers when asked for whom they were fighting answered that they were the soldiers of God and most of the captains executed died "very assuredly and

[1] De Thou II, 764; Condé I, 9.
[2] Forbes I, 378; Paillard 73, qtd. Span. Amb.

constantly for religion in singing of psalms." When one nobleman by the name of Villemongey mounted the scaffold he stooped to dip his hands in the blood of his companions and raising them to Heaven cried out, "Oh God Most Good and Most Gracious, behold the innocent blood of those who belong to You, whose death You will not leave unpunished." The horror of these executions was increased by the fact that the ladies and gentlemen of the court rather made a spectacle of them, crowding the windows of the château and treating the matter as if it were a festival. To this general cruel attitude of the court two exceptions have been recorded. The Duchess of Guise wept and refused to witness the executions and Catherine de' Medici saved from death and "caused to be sent home a great number." [1]

Although the conspiracy of Amboise was not based entirely upon religion, for there were orthodox Roman Catholics among the prisoners, the attitude of those who perished for it put them in the light of martyrs of the Protestant party and the beginnings of that terrible hatred which was soon to envelop all France, a hatred to which both sides gave the sanction of religion, can be seen in the following incident. The young Agrippa d'Aubigné, the future historian, then a lad ten years old, was passing through the city of Amboise with his father. The heads of the more notable conspirators were still to be seen fixed on spikes above the gates where, according to the custom of the times, they had been placed to molder. His father took him by the hand and said, "My child, you must not spare your head after mine. Revenge these chieftains, full of honor, whose heads you have just seen. If you spare yourself in this matter you will have my curse upon you." [2]

The government announced that those summarily executed were traitors who had planned to kill the King, his mother, his brothers and all having the management of

[1] Forbes I, 378, de Thou II, 773, La Place 54, Castelnau 18 (present).
[2] Castelnau 19, d'Aubigne (2), 5.

public affairs or at least to reduce the "authority of the King to the mercy of the subjects who should give the law to him from whom they ought to take it." Pierre de la Place, who had been appointed by Henry II the first president of the *Cour des Aides* of Paris, after pointing out that the real purpose of the conspiracy was to depose the Guise from power and put them on trial and that all the conspirators were bound by solemn oath not to hurt the King or any of the princes of the blood, goes on to say:

"Among the conspirators in that enterprise there were a number who held the doctrine called new who were named Huguenots. This name began to be used in the city of Tours, a few days before the conspiracy, because of the gate of the city named after King Hugo, near which those of the said religion were wont to go to say their prayers; taken up by the courtiers, it has become universal. The said religionists, called Huguenots, said that they had 'joined with the others in order to present their confession of faith to get mitigation of the persecution and to demand the assembly of the Estates General."

A Catholic living in Paris wrote in his diary that the insurrection was got up under pretext of religion, although the common report was that there was in it more "*malcontentment* than *Huguenoterie.*" [1]

The Guise were not at all satisfied that they had gotten at the bottom of the affair. The Venetian Ambassador reports that some of the prisoners confessed that they were in the service of the Prince of Condé and "it has been told me that the Cardinal from inability to restrain himself dashed his cap to the ground in a rage, stamping upon it several times." But they did not dare attack a prince of the blood, a younger brother of the King of Navarre, without strong and explicit evidence. Catherine evidently regarded the conspiracy of Amboise both as a warning and an opportunity. She was very ill at ease about it and wanted to know whether or not it had been backed by the heretics of France as a whole, and what were the chances

[1] Condé I, 349, 8. La Place, Paillard qtd. Span. Amb. 44.

that the adherents of the new secret churches might get the open leadership of princes of the blood and great nobles for a general rising. They had, as we have seen, previously regarded her as their friend, but "seeing that they no longer addressed themselves to her," she sent word to Chandieu, the chief minister of the church of Paris, offering him a safe conduct if he would come and talk with her. He answered that he was afraid to come, but finally a letter was written to her under an assumed name which assured her that the forces which had approached Amboise had not been intended to act against her or the King, but solely to get the chance of presenting to the King a petition and a remonstrance concerning the state of the kingdom: which related chiefly to the power of the Guise and the persecution. The means of escape from civil war were, first, to appoint a royal council according to the ancient laws of France and not according to the desires of the house of Guise. Second, in order to appease the troubles of religion, to call a holy and free council, preferably a general council of the whole church: if not, a national council, and that meantime men should be allowed to live according to the confession of faith held in the Reformed churches of France.[1]

Catherine had asked that the letter should be presented to her secretly, so that, if she wished to adopt any of its suggestions, she might put them forward as coming from herself alone. This was very difficult, but a man by the name of Camus undertook to do it. After watching for some time, he finally found what he thought would be a good chance in the abbey of Beaulieu just outside of the town of Loches. He had prepared two packets, one, which he was to present openly, containing papers about money which Catherine owed to his late father: the other containing the letter. He found the Queen Mother in the courtyard of the Abbey and he slipped the second packet into her hand without being seen by the young queen, who followed her as if watching all her actions. Catherine went

[1] B. N. qtd. 1723 f. 3; de la Planche 152, 155, 157.

into a chamber to read the letter, but the young Queen came in suddenly and saw it, so Catherine joined her in reporting it to the Cardinal. The bearer was examined about his knowledge of the conspiracy of Amboise and particularly about "the Prince," who was, according to rumor, the "mute chief." They threatened to put him to torture and death if he didn't tell all he knew, but they couldn't get very much out of him, although he was repeatedly interrogated by the Queen and others.

Being anxious to find out the truth, not only in regard to the discontent of the persecuted heretics, but also about the present state of the old enmity between the houses of Guise and Montmorency, Catherine sent also for a devoted adherent of the house of Montmorency, a gentleman by the name of Louis Regnier de la Planche, and asked him what were the real reasons for these troubles and what he suggested as a remedy for them. His written account of the interview is given in summary form in the book spoken of on page 142, which is usually, but I think mistakenly, attributed to him. He was brought into the private room of the Queen Mother, and the Cardinal of Lorraine was hidden behind the tapestry during the interview. He said that those who were called Huguenots were made up of two different sorts of people, the one were moved by their conscience and the other by consideration for the condition of the state. The first had joined la Renaudie because they could no longer bear the persecution, the others because the state was in the hands of aliens while the princes of the blood were shut out from the government. The first might be appeased by an assembly called on the pretense of translating the Bible at which the differences between the two parties could be composed. The second could only be satisfied by putting the government in the hands of the princes of the blood by means of the assembly of the Estates General. He went on to denounce the house of Guise as alien usurpers of power. The Queen Mother answered that she would be delighted if the King of Navarre

and the Prince of Condé would stay at court like the Prince of Montpensier and the Prince de la Roche-Sur-Yon and if they would do so she could promise them favorable and honorable treatment. He was summoned to a second interview in the afternoon, threatened a little bit and urged to give help in tracing the roots of the late rebellion. He replied by a new attack on the house of Guise and said that he was neither a member of the police nor a spy to track pretended rebels. The Queen Mother, in apparent rage, ordered him into the hands of her guard, but he was released after four days' imprisonment.

CHAPTER X

CATHERINE'S POLICY OF CONCILIATION

We have very few letters of Catherine's dated in the spring of 1560 and it is probable that she did not write very many. Nevertheless, we see plainly enough it marks a great change in her life: the beginning of large influence over public affairs. During the twenty-seven years after she came to France an ignorant, friendless girl of fourteen to be married to a young prince because of her *dot* and the political influence of her great-uncle the Pope, her opinion about political matters had seldom been asked and never counted for very much. Now, when the Cardinal of Lorraine, alarmed by the conspiracy of Amboise, asked her to leave for a time the rôle of figurehead and help him if she could in steering the ship of state, she was not content simply to aid him in holding his course. She had quietly made her own investigation of the facts and had drawn her own conclusions. She was seriously impressed by the amount of discontent of various kinds which lay behind the abortive conspiracy of Amboise, and strongly suspected that the Queen of England had some secret relation to those who might be disposed to undertake the defense of the persecuted heretics.[1] She was not, therefore, willing to measure the danger of the situation by the ease with which the late conspiracy had been put down. Perhaps also she saw, even at this early date, that political forces were concerned, which, if shrewdly handled, might assure her permanent power in the state.

At all events she did two things. She had already advised the Cardinal to call Coligny to court and she now drew closer to this old adherent of her husband's faction when

[1] Letts. I, 136, Cal. Vcn. 201. See Note.

he was only Dauphin, whom he had made Admiral of France as soon as he became King. Coligny was the brains of the Huguenot party and with her inclination strengthened by his advice she made up her mind that, although Lorraine had called on her only for help, she would give him direction and change the general character of the policy of the Crown in regard to "the troubles of religion." For a time she succeeded in carrying out her purpose, and launched a definite policy of conciliation.

The first marked sign of this policy had been the edicts lightening persecution already issued by Coligny's advice. These, by the testimony of Reformed and orthodox alike, had not been generally obeyed by the judges; either because of secret orders from the Cardinal or irrepressible zeal for orthodoxy on their own part. The need of a policy of conciliation was suggested more and more strongly by the news which came from many parts of the kingdom. For example: near Bordeaux mobs were breaking the images of saints in the churches: in Normandy in some places, "Preaching was going on as freely as in Geneva:" in Provence and Dauphiny great assemblies of armed men worshipped in open defiance of the law. From the Bishop of Montpellier in Languedoc word came to Catherine towards the end of 1560 that the Pretended Reformed had seized the church of St. Matthieu. He begged her to check "these monsters who want to extinguish the true religion and bury in one great tomb all its ministers in order to put in their place the frogs of Geneva and the snakes of Zurich." In May, therefore, the Crown issued the Edict of Romorantin on the subject of religion and sedition, which transferred cases of heresy from the King's courts to the bishops' courts, and provided summary justice for armed assemblies contrary to law. The Edict was somewhat ambiguous and it was criticized from both sides. The Spanish Ambassador wrote: "The bishops will not dare to punish heretics for fear lest they rise some day and kill them all." Others

thought it an attempt to bring the Spanish inquisition into France.[1]

Whatever other people may have thought about it, Catherine intended to use the Edict to lessen persecution. Soon after it was issued, there came into the service of the Crown a man who was to be for some time Catherine's chief instrument in the policy of conciliation upon which she was determined. Michel de l'Hospital was now fifty-three years old and had already made a name for himself. Well known as a Latin poet, he had addressed his most complimentary poems to different members of the house of Guise. But he had been recommended to Catherine not by them, but by her sister-in-law, the Duchess of Savoy, in whose service he had been for some time. When the Chancellor of France, Olivier, died, in the end of March, 1560, probably both the Queen Mother and the all-powerful royal minister agreed in the desire to appoint l'Hospital to succeed him. Thus there entered into the service of the Crown a resolute and wise man who, attacked by extremists of both sides, has nevertheless been praised by more historians of more varied types than any character of those troublous times, because, amid the hates and passions of civil war, he kept "the lilies of France in his heart."

One striking outcome of the new policy was a letter sent August 7, 1560, signed by the young King. The Catholic cantons of the Swiss League had written to him in the end of May expressing their dislike of the sects hostile to the Church and the Christian faith which were established among their neighbors. They wrote that the preachers of these sects were scattering libels everywhere, and the Catholic cantons were afraid of being compelled to change their religion by force of arms. They were therefore considering striking first. The King's reply pointed out that the evil they complained of was one common to all Christendom. There was no prince, republic nor community which was

[1] Castelnau, Bk. I, Ch. 11, p. 22, e.g. B. N. C. C. C. 27 f. 227, B. N. It. 1721 f. 44, A. N. K. 1493 f. 49, Neg. Fr. II, 541, 562. Zeller 385. Isambert 14, p. 31. A. N. K. qtd. De Croze I, 71.

not in great trouble about it and doubtful of the remedy. "Because, since the punishment of so many people who had been put to death in order to strike terror into those who were infected by these sects and heresies and to keep the faithful firm in their religion had been rather a means of spreading the poison throughout the world than of bringing back the wanderers from the way of truth, we must confess" that the only remedy left was a council of the Church. He was working now with the Pope, the Emperor and the King of Spain to arrange such a council. Meantime he advises them to remember that union was the strength of the Swiss cantons and to take everything patiently. If, after they had exhausted all means of peace, their neighbors should ever be so unreasonable as to try "to force them to receive the law from them, the King will give them all aid and assistance." This letter came out of Catherine's influence, perhaps with the aid of L'Hospital, for the ideas and even their expression sound like him. In July when urging the Parlement of Paris to register the Edict of Romorantin, he had pointed out that, "Although Francis I and Henry II had tried to weed out the tares from among the wheat, now the tares were grown so thick that it is impossible to pull them out without pulling out the wheat also," that just as physicians abandon medicines which do not cure the disease, so the state must give up the attempt to cure its troubles by persecution. "The more so since these troubles of religion are not confined to France but are also found among our neighbors of England, Germany and Scotland." He asked for summary justice for the rebellious, but for toleration and persuasion for heretics until a general council could bring peace and harmony to the Church.[1]

These moves in the direction of conciliation seem to have had their first effect upon the temper of the Ambassador of Spain. The eighth of June Catherine wrote to the French Ambassador at Madrid complaining bitterly of him and saying she would rejoice at his recall. Two weeks

[1] Arch. Lucerne, 7 Aug. 1560. Condé I, 543.

before the King had written a similar letter and the Cardinal of Lorraine accompanied this by a letter complaining that "the representative of the Spanish King had not been content with throwing an ordinance signed by the hand of the King upon the ground and calling a royal judgment bad and unhappy, but had also added that the Guise committed intolerable injustice with a thousand other similar words extremely insolent." The probability is that this bad temper of Chantonay was due to orders from home, and the probability is made almost certainty by a dispatch of the Venetian Ambassador in Spain written eight years later. The Ambassador predicts that Counts Egmont and Horn, under arrest for protests against matters of religion and administration in the Netherlands, would be executed, because the King had within a few days said to the Nuncio about the affairs of France that "the bad situation there is due to the fact that the French King and Queen had not listened to him when, more than eight years ago, he tried to convince them that they ought at every price to seize the suspected leaders of discontent and by some means put them to death: which suggests that His Majesty does not intend to fall into the same error which he has condemned in others." [1]

While Spain objected to any conciliation, the Reformed churches and the Bourbon Montmorency nobility thought the form of conciliation offered by Catherine's new policy, which the Guise had ostensibly [2] accepted, entirely insufficient. The discontent of the sympathizers with the illegal Reformed churches continued to appear sporadically in armed resistance to the law.

Paul de Mouvans, a nephew of the Cardinal of Tournon, was descended from the younger branch of a noble family of Provence. He and his brother Anthony had served as officers of the King in the Italian wars, and became converted to the Reformed doctrines. Coming home at the

[1] Letts., I, 138; Neg. Fr. II, 384. Gossart, I, 92.
[2] See Lambert, I, 115; their orders to hang a Huguenot prisoner.

peace of Cateau-Cambrésis, the two brothers had brought a minister from Geneva and held services in a house of theirs in the little city of Castellane, near Marseilles. They made converts and, in February, 1559, a mob attacked the house. The Mouvans and their adherents defended it, killed three of the assailants and rode out of the city, sword in hand. Paul went to Aix, capital of Provence, to demand legal redress; for he claimed that nobles had the right to listen to discourses on religion in their own houses. Parlement adjourned the case and Paul went to Paris to get redress. Meantime the people of Castellane set to work to plunder and burn the houses of the Reformed sympathizers in the city and its neighborhood. Anthony raised a band of partisans and executed reprisals, plundering especially churches and monasteries. Paul came back with orders from the Chancellor transferring the suit of the Mouvans to the neighboring Parlement of Grenoble, but the Parlement of Aix refused to register the writ of the Chancellor and put a price on the heads of the two brothers. The governor of the province, anxious to end the incipient civil war, proposed arbitration by a commission of three nobles and the chief magistrate (*viguier*) of Castellane. The Mouvans agreed and Anthony, on his way to the place of arbitration, spent the night at the little city of Draguignan. When his presence was known the mob rose, killed the magistrate who tried to protect him, dragged him into the street and literally tore him to pieces, carrying his heart through the streets on the point of a pike. The fragment of his mutilated corpse was afterwards dug up from the grave where one of his friends who rescued it from the sewer had laid it, and by orders of the prosecutor of the Parlement, put in a barrel of salt and sent to Aix to be hung on the common gallows. This was a true prophecy of the bestial ferocity which was to characterize, especially in the south, the civil wars whose shadow was alarming Catherine. Paul de Mouvans at once turned from the law courts to the sword to avenge his brother. He raised a force of two

thousand men and kept the field, feeding them largely by exactions from the Catholic population and paying them by melting down the gold and silver vessels of the churches. Catherine ordered the Governor to conciliate him and, on condition of amnesty for his soldiers, the free exercise of religion in his own house and the punishment of the murderers of his brother, Mouvans agreed to disband his force. But shortly afterwards, afraid of his brother's fate, he mounted and followed by a few faithful followers rode into Switzerland.[1]

In Dauphiny Charles, Seigneur de Montbrun, who had also won distinction in the wars of Italy and afterward become converted to the Reformed religion, was summoned before the Parlement of Grenoble under charges of having compelled the inhabitants of his estates to become Huguenots and of having supported an illegal minister at a neighboring town. Fearing for his life, he wrote a polite letter denying the charges and refusing to come to the Parlement. He supported his refusal by the edict suspending all action on account of religion. The Parlement then sent the *prevost des maréchaux* to bring him dead or alive. Montbrun met him on the road and after a stormy interview, knocked him from his horse and carried him off a prisoner. He then raised a force of picked men and invaded the Comtat de Venaissin. This was territory on the borders of Dauphiny which belonged to the Pope and was ruled by a Legate. A considerable number of the inhabitants had become Protestants and the object of Montbrun's invasion was to defend them against a very severe persecution.[2]

In addition to these open revolts word came from Gascony that many nobles had sold their estates and gathered themselves together for some purpose unknown.[3]

The Bourbon-Montmorency faction of the nobles showed its opposition not with the sword, but with the pen.

[1] Lambert, I, 86-98.
[2] Arnaud (1).
[3] Cal. Vcn., 221.

Numbers of pamphlets and placards violently attacking the administration continued to appear. One of the most characteristic productions of this sort was entitled, "A Response to all the Calumnies Heretofore Offered Against the Nobility of France Which Has Set Itself Against the Tyranny of the House of Guise." It is a careful argument on the ground of constitutional precedent that the house of Guise had no right to the management of state affairs during the youth of the King, because that legally belonged to the princes of the blood. Even if this were not true, there were three good reasons why the house of Guise could not rightfully have the management of the realm: First, they were foreign and not French princes. Second, they pretended to have a claim to the throne through their descent from Hugh Capet. Third, they had brought terrible losses upon the realm by their past management. Before the death of the late King they had stripped France of troops to make themselves great in Italy, with disastrous results still fresh in the memory of everybody. Since the death of the late King they had rendered Scotland useless to the Crown, seized all the money of France, defaulting even on the interest of the King's debts, and withholding the pay of the army, while at the same time burdening the poor people with enormous taxes. They had overthrown the authority of the courts of Parlement; especially by the last edict, by which the jurisdiction over cases of religion was taken away from these courts and given to the ecclesiastical courts of which the Cardinal of Lorraine was the leader in this kingdom. In short, the bad administration of the Guise had "led wise men to think of the old proverb that when those of the house of Guise shall have sheared the King they will take even his skin." [1]

The appearance of this protest against the rule of the Guise was doubly ominous of danger to the peace of France. In the first place, Catherine's suspicion that those who attacked the rule of the Guise were supported by the Queen

[1] Condé.

of England was made certainty by a proclamation Elizabeth issued after Francis and Mary had joined the arms of England to those of Scotland and France. Elizabeth said she would keep peace with France and Scotland because "these insolent attempts are but the abuse of the House of Guise—who have the chief governance of the crown of France during the minority of the King and Queen." [1]

In the second place, this appeal to constitutional law against the dominance of the House of Guise was ominous because it showed the way of union between the chief forces of discontent: the Bourbon-Montmorency faction of the nobility and the Reformed churches. Calvin had disapproved of the conspiracy of Amboise because he distrusted la Renaudie and feared anarchy, but his early humanistic training had given him the dislike of "tyranny" in the classic sense of unlawful power which so many of the humanists learned from Cicero. He finally formed a theory of constitutional resistance: "Though the correcting of unbridled governments be the revengement of the Lord, let us not by and by think that it is committed to us, to whom there is given no other commandment but to obey and suffer. I speak only of private men. But if there be at this time any magistrates for the behalf of the people such as the ephori of Lacedemonia or the tribunes of the people at Rome, I do not forbid them, according to their office, to withstand the outraging licentiousness of kings. Nay, I affirm that if they wink at a king's treading down of the poor commonalty, it is a wicked breach of faith, because they deceitfully betray the liberty of the people whereof they know themselves to be appointed protectors by the ordinance of God." [2]

One of these attacks upon the Guise which appeared in the late spring or early summer is as striking an example as can be found in history of the pitch of intensity to which religious feelings, the desire for vengeance and political

[1] Letts. I, 136, Cal. F. 1560, p. 472.
[2] Institutes, IV, XX, 31.

passion can raise hatred. It is a short pamphlet written in nervous French which reproduces with great force the method and feeling of Cicero's orations against Catiline. It is meant for the Cardinal of Lorraine, and is headed, "A Letter Sent to the Tiger of France," and it begins, "Mad tiger, venomous viper, sepulchre of abomination, receptacle of unhappiness, how long wilt thou abuse the youth of our King? Wilt thou never put a term to thy unmeasured ambition, to thy falsehoods, to thy stealings? Dost thou think that anyone is ignorant of thy detestable design and fails to read in thy face the curse of our times, the ruin of this kingdom and the death of our King?" [1]

In addition to this serious discontent from two sources, showing itself by sword and by pen, the finances of the kingdom were in a very grave condition. During the reign of Henry II, owing to war, to excessive generosity and corrupt administration, the debt of France had rolled up. It now amounted to over forty millions of francs, which was about three times the annual income of the state. This in spite of the fact that the income of the Crown had been doubled and the direct tax increased about fifty per cent. The need of cash was so great that many salaries were unpaid and the treasury had been obliged to declare a sort of half-bankruptcy. An Italian banker who was a large creditor of the Crown, protesting against this partial repudiation, said, in the presence of the royal council, that "even in Turkey they didn't do the things which were done in France." But his indignation brought him nothing but a threat of prison.[2]

An acute consciousness of all these causes of trouble was kept vivid in Catherine's mind in two ways. Direct appeal was made to her. While she was at supper in the château of Fontainebleau a note was thrown in through the open window which said that if she did not quickly set free some Calvinist preachers who were imprisoned in the

[1] Read.
[2] Clamageran. B. N. It. 1721, f. 30; Val. Ven., 222.

city of Tours, "she would find herself the most unhappy princess alive." Of the other sort of notice, the following which has survived without address, date or signature, will serve as a specimen: "A few days ago Maligny and Captain Bobous, a Provençal, passed through Bergerac accompanied by twenty-five men well mounted, armed with cutlasses and carrying pistols at their saddle-bows, and the man who sent me this word informs me that they are on the road to Normandy, although it is possible that they might take some other road. I wanted to send you word of this, but I beg of you that, having read this letter, you would be pleased to tear it up and to throw the pieces in the fire." These things had determined Catherine to assert her authority and to move strongly in the direction of a policy of conciliation. Doubtless by the advice of Michel de l'Hospital, there was issued in July, 1560, the first of that splendid series of royal edicts by which during the eight years of his power he endeavored to reform the administration of the French state. Alluding to the intolerable burden of taxation caused by the debts of the late King, the edict forbade a practice which had become customary of levying taxes in the various provinces in order to gratify governors or other royal officials in those provinces under the name of gifts. The penalty imposed is eight times the sum of the "gift," divided between the people upon whom the tax was levied and the royal treasury.[1]

Catherine had already sent Admiral Coligny into Normandy, where the Reformed were very strong, in order to find out what would remove their discontent. Following the advice of both the Admiral and the Chancellor, she now determined to call at Fontainebleau an Assembly of Notables to take council on the state of the kingdom. There were summoned to it the chief nobles, all governors of provinces and all who had the right to enter the privy council.[2]

[1] B. N. It. 1721, f. 146, C. C. C. 27, f. 139; Letts., I, 153.
[2] B. N. It., 1721, f. 50.

Catherine was particularly anxious that the heads of the great houses of Bourbon and Montmorency should be present at this meeting and she dictated the following letter to the King of Navarre:

"My brother, I have suffered so much sorrow during the past year and I have seen this poor realm afflicted by so many calamities, one on top of the other, that I haven't had much leisure up to now but . . . seeing all the disturbances which have for some months been going on in this kingdom, it has seemed to me, and to all the good servants of the King, that no better means can be found in the present necessity than to assemble all those who have the honor of belonging to his council; in order that in so large and good a company it may be possible to find the remedy of the present evil situation and to appease all the troubles which we see now in this realm. Therefore, my brother, because you have the honor to be so close to the King, my son, and because you are among the leading personages of his council, I desire that the beginning should be made with you, assuring myself that, because you are the first who belongs to him in blood, you will be also the first in the devotion you have always shown towards the late King, my lord, and towards him. I pray you, therefore, to come to him immediately, and you can assure yourself, my brother, that he and I will take every pains to give you so good a welcome that . . . you will have no occasion to be sorry that you have come into a company where you will be so much loved and esteemed. . . .

Your good sister, CATERINE."

She wrote also to the Constable urging him to obey the summons of the King and to his wife to use her influence to get her husband to come. In spite of Catherine's letter, backed by most flattering letters from the King, the King of Navarre would not come to the Assembly, but the Constable arrived about the middle of August accompanied by his children, his nephews and a great company of his friends, amounting in all to six hundred horse.[1]

The Assembly met in great state. There were present the King and Queen, the Queen Mother and the brothers of the King, the Cardinals of Bourbon and Lorraine, the

[1] Letts. 144, 146; B. N. Nouvs. Acqs. 6003, f. 3, 10, 34, It. 1721, f. 56.

Dukes of Guise and Aumale, the Constable, the Chancellor, the Admiral and the Marshals St. André and Brissac, the Bishops of Orleans, Vienne and Valence, all the chevaliers of the order of St. Michel and the royal secretaries. Catherine opened the meeting by begging the Assembly to counsel the King, her son, in such a way that "his sceptre may be preserved, his subjects eased and the malcontents contented, if it be possible," and it was a quiet but complete triumph for her new policy of conciliation.

The Duke of Guise began the proceedings by making a report as Lieutenant General of France. This was followed by a report from the Cardinal of Lorraine on the finances. There was no attempt to attack the two brothers in the tone of any of the twenty-two libels which the Cardinal said he now had upon his table, but the dislike of persecution of the Reformed churches and the desire to employ traditionary methods in the conduct of the government, prevailed so strongly that the Cardinal and the Duke were compelled to give way and swim with the tide. Admiral Coligny presented two petitions, one to the King and the other to the Queen Mother, which he said would have been signed, if he had wished it, by fifty thousand adherents of the Reformed churches in Normandy. The petitioners reminded the King that the office of King was ordained by God in order that "following the example of good kings like David, Hezekiah and Josiah, You might restore in your kingdom the true and right service of God and exterminate all abuses." They asked for temples in each city and village for their worship and professed their willingness to obey all laws and pay all taxes even greater than those which were now levied. They called upon the Queen Mother to follow the example of Esther; to have pity upon the chosen people and to deliver them. "Therefore, sovereign princess, we supplicate you, by the affection which you owe to Jesus Christ, to establish His true service and to drive out all others." [1]

[1] Condé, II, 645.

The Admiral, in commenting upon these petitions, demanded the reform of the abuses of the Church and the assembly of the Estates General. The Cardinal of Lorraine advised the Queen not to grant the temples for that would be to approve of idolatry and to merit damnation. He said, however, that as far as concerned those who went without arms to heretic services, or stayed away from mass, since the penalties which had been inflicted upon them had up to the present moment done no good, the King ought to prohibit their being touched any more by the hand of justice. He was even very sorry that such severe punishment had been inflicted before and he would that his life or his death could be of some use to such poor deluded people. He felt that hereafter the bishops ought to try to correct their errors in evangelic ways. "Correct thy brother between him and thee." He believed that the Estates General ought to be called and that the reports of the bailiffs and seneschals ought to be assembled in order to see whether it would be better to hold a national or a universal council of the Church. When all had expressed their opinion in turn, it was unanimously agreed to call the Estates General for the 10th of December and afterwards, if the Pope and the other rulers would not agree to a universal council, to call a national council of the Gallican Church. The decision of the King to call these two assemblies was announced to the kingdom in a royal edict issued on the 31st of August, 1560.[1]

But although Catherine, by adroitly bringing into play the anti-Guise elements in the state, could launch her new policy of conciliation and an appeal to the nation, she could not hold control of the situation. A mistake of some of their antagonists suddenly made the Guise again masters of France.

Catherine's first impression of this new event so disturbing to her plans, has survived in a letter, written to her daughter, the Queen of Spain, where the obscurity

[1] Recueil, 11. Neg. Fr. II, p. 486.

common to all the letters written by her own hand is increased by the agitation of her mind:

"Madame, my daughter, you will see the reason for this dispatch by what the Ambassador will tell you about it, which will be the reason why I do not tell it over again. I will only say that God has helped us well, and I will put things again in such a state, if it pleases Him to aid us, that we could not have a greater occasion to thank and serve Him as we ought according to the grace which He has shown towards us of having us discover everything. For it seems that it is really a miracle, the way in which we found out everything and He is certainly showing us how much He loves us and all this kingdom, which ought to make us think that, since He wishes to maintain our house, He will maintain you also in your contentment and grandeur—but that you should be grateful to Him and serve Him as you ought, which is what I pray you never to forget." [1]

Catherine was agitated because a new conspiracy had been discovered. Just at the close of the assembly of the Notables in Fontainebleau, a gentleman by the name of de la Sague was sent by the Prince of Condé to court, partly to bring him back some money from his wife, partly to gather news. De la Sague talked indiscreetly to one of the courtiers whom he supposed to be a servitor of the King of Navarre, and the conversation was reported to Marshal Brissac. The Marshal advised him to go and tell the Duke of Guise. Guise watched de la Sague and when he started home, arrested him with a whole valise filled with letters addressed to the Prince of Condé. Here they found confirmation of the vague reports which had been coming to them for months of a conspiracy far more dangerous than that of Amboise. The conspirators were to begin by seizing the cities of Poitiers, Tours, Orleans and Lyons and then to advance upon the court with forces gathered from all the provinces of the southern part of the kingdom, to put the princes of the blood at the head of the government and to arrest the Cardinal of Lorraine and the Duke of Guise for treason. When the Cardinal had read the letters

[1] Letts. I, 564.

in de la Sague's valise, he went at once, although it was late at night, to the Queen Mother. She went to the King's room and summoned the Constable and the Chancellor, who had long been in bed. They consulted until one o'clock in the morning and then sent to Paris to arrest the Vidame of Chartres, a powerful noble, who was the most directly compromised in the matter. A letter was immediately written by the King to his Ambassador to tell the King of Spain what had happened and to beg him to be ready in case of need to help him with military force.[1]

The Prince of Condé was the head of the conspiracy, but it was not possible to be certain whether the King of Navarre and the Queen of England were also engaged in it or not. Word was sent to the King of Navarre that a great conspiracy in the name of the Prince of Condé had been prepared in the realm, and he was ordered to bring his brother to Court to clear himself of these dishonoring charges.[2]

The information obtained enabled the Cardinal and the Duke of Guise to crush the revolt everywhere, the attempt to seize the cities by small bodies of soldiers secretly introduced into them, proved a disastrous failure and by October the danger was over.

The King of Navarre naturally hesitated under the circumstances to obey the summons to go to court and he was advised by large numbers of gentlemen friendly to him, either not to go at all or else to go accompanied by such a train that his enemies of the house of Guise would not be able to lay hands upon him. It is easy to imagine that his hesitation was decreased by the following very friendly letter written by Catherine with her own hand:

"My brother, the King my son is sending you Monsieur de Cursol for the occasion which he will tell you and you will see by the letter which he has written. Knowing how well you know that I love and esteem him and the place which he holds in my

[1] La Place, 104, ff. B. N. It. 1721, f. 150; Neg. Fr. II, 490.
[2] Neg. Fr. II, 482.

service, I will not write you any longer letter, because I assure myself that you will believe what he will say to you on my part as if it were myself: which is what I beg you to be willing to do and I assure you that there is no person in the world who desires more your peace and contentment than does your good sister, Caterine."

Another letter written some weeks later finally succeeded in overcoming the hesitation of the King of Navarre, and, accompanied by his brother, he arrived at court, in the city of Orleans on the 31st of October. They were received at once by the King in the room of the Queen Mother. The King would not lift his cap to the Prince of Condé, although he was noted for his politeness in bowing to the simplest gentleman of his realm. On the other hand, neither Navarre nor his brother exchanged the slightest greetings with the Cardinal of Lorraine and the Duke of Guise. Soon afterwards the Queen Mother, the King and Queen, the Cardinal of Lorraine, the Duke of Guise and the Chancellor, together with the two older brothers of the house of Bourbon, the King of Navarre and the Cardinal of Bourbon, withdrew into a smaller room of the Queen Mother and sent for Condé, who, on entering the room was immediately arrested by the captain of the guard; nor could his two brothers, the King of Navarre and the Cardinal of Bourbon, though they knelt before the King and begged to have him put in their charge, secure his release from prison. Condé bore himself with dignity but as he was leaving the room turned and said to his brother, the Cardinal of Bourbon, "Sir, with your assurances of safety you have delivered your own brother to death." "Whereupon he was so much grieved that he could not restrain his tears." [1]

Condé ought rather to have reproached Catherine, because it seems quite certain that, both directly and indirectly, her assurances had been the most effective in bringing him within the trap. The Venetian Ambassador reported

[1] Letts. I, 148; X, 25; B. N. It. 1721; La Place, 112.

a few days later: "The Prince of la Roche-sur-Yon (Condé's cousin) is, as I hear from one of his confidants, filled with the greatest grief, saying that he is the cause why these gentlemen put themselves in the hands of the King as they have done, being assured by a firm promise made to him by the Queen Mother. When he complained to the Queen Mother, she said it was done by order of the King, but she would not fail to use all her influence for them." [1]

This arrest seemed to paralyze the power of the enemies of the Guise who began to feel free to abandon the policy of conciliation that had been forced upon them by Catherine. That she had forced it upon them we know, not by conjecture, but from the Cardinal of Lorraine himself, for the Spanish Ambassador wrote soon after the Assembly of the Notables: "The Cardinal has lamented to the Nuncio over the misery and calamities of these times . . . declaring . . . that, to his great grief, it had been determined to call the Estates and to convoke the prelates of France. But that he had not been able to stop it, for the greater part of those who came to the recent assembly had been adherents of the new religion." What really lay behind the Cardinal's regret expressed in the Assembly at Fontainebleau that such severity had been employed against the heretics is shown by the following letter which he joined his brother in writing, soon after the arrest of Condé, to the Comte de Villars, his agent for the suppression of the Huguenots: "You have begun so well that there is good hope that by this stroke you will completely clean up what can be cleaned up of the vermin which is in this country. We recommend that those whom you find in arms should be punished as you know the military laws indicate. . . . After having punished the leaders, send the others to the galleys where there is a great need of convicts." [2]

In spite of this failure of their enemies, the Guise could

[1] B. N. It., 1721, Nov. 10.
[2] A. N. K. 1493, f. 91. B. N. Nouvs. Acqs. 6011, f. 23.

not feel that they were complete masters of the situation because of the continual reports of disorder which came in from the provinces. There can be little doubt, however, that they had determined on a policy of terror, which, if it had not precipitated a civil war at once, would have led to the extermination of the Reformed churches and the unquestioned supremacy of the house of Guise. It is probable that the Cardinal of Lorraine and his brother planned that the chief noblemen of the realm, all the officers of the Crown and of the royal household, together with all the members of the Estates General which was shortly to assemble, should be compelled to sign a written confession of the orthodox faith in the presence of the King. All judges, magistrates and officers of state throughout the entire realm, were afterwards to be compelled to sign it and it was then to be put into the hands of the priests of each parish, who were to carry it from house to house, accompanied by the officers of the law, to compel every subject of the King to sign it under penalty of banishment, confiscation or death.[1]

They began this plan of violent repression at the top. On the 26th of November, the Prince of Condé was condemned to death for treason by the royal council.

We know from what she afterwards did and from her subsequent attitude toward the Prince of Condé, that this reversal of her policy of conciliation was very distasteful to Catherine, but she was afraid of the power of the Guise and dared not protest openly. The Cardinal of Lorraine did not make it too evident that he was acting against her judgment, for a little later the Spanish Ambassador reported that the Cardinal and his brother were ready to support the authority of the Queen Mother with all their force, but he simply began again to use the figure of the King's mother as a sort of seal to give greater authority to his own decisions. He expected her to feel that half a

[1] E. g., C. C. C. 27 f. 271, Niort; 204, Nantes; 148, Rouerge; 168, Perigueux; 228, Bordeaux. See Note.

loaf was better than no bread, and to accept the show of power, while he destroyed his enemies from behind the shelter of her skirts. He was an old and skilful player at the game of politics, a man, in the judgment of the Venetian Ambassador, "without an equal in the world for knowing how to dissimulate," but he was now to meet his match and be beaten at his own game by this "tall, stout woman with a red face, hair that looks as if it were false, pale eyes, a big mouth and a rough way of speaking almost like that of a peasant woman," [1] who hated the elegant Cardinal with all her heart.

The first explicit sign that Catherine had determined not to go back to exercising a mere nominal authority, while a policy she disapproved of was carried out by the Cardinal of Lorraine and his brother, is the following letter written to the Constable:

"My Gossip: The King my son is sending you the Marquis de Villars to give you the news and to tell you all that has happened since you wrote, and it displeases me very much that I am obliged so often to return to our troublous affairs because that tires everybody. I wish that your health would permit you to be with us because I believe firmly that if you were here we should be wiser and you would help to bring the King out of tutelage, because you have always wished that your master should be obeyed everywhere. I will not trouble you with a longer letter, leaving what else I have to say to the Marquis, and I will close after having told you that I wish you were near your King and your good gossip and friend, Caterine."

This letter was accompanied by a similar one to the Constable's wife suggesting how very much Catherine wanted them both at court.[2]

A week later the King was confined to his room by what was announced as a trifling cold, but the Venetian Ambassador added ten days later, "The King is worse and the Queen Mother can't help showing clear signs of trouble, not being able to hide her distress, which is increased be-

[1] A. N. K. 1493, Rel. I, 4, p. 132. Swiss Envoy qtd., Whitehead, 86.
[2] Letts. I, 153.

cause she remembers the prognostications made by certain astrologers who agreed in prophesying for His Majesty the very shortest of lives." That the Ambassador had rightly read the signs of Catherine's distress in spite of the public announcement that the illness of the King was not serious, appears from the following letter to her sister-in-law written in the end of November:

"To Madame the Duchess of Savoy.
"Madame:

"I do not know where to commence my letter when I think of the state in which I find myself because of the trouble and affliction which it pleases God to send me after so many evils and such unhappiness, to see the state in which the King my son is from a pain in the head so extreme that, although I still hope that our Lord will not do me so much unhappiness as to take him away from me, nevertheless I see, Madame, that he is very sick. . . . I will not fail to send you word immediately if God does me the grace to heal him, as I am praying Him to do, and to give you as much contentment as is desired for you by your very humble and obedient sister, Caterine."

On the 5th of December, 1560, the mother's fears were realized. The young King died from the results of an abscess in the inner ear which the surgery of the day could not help.[1]

[1] B. N. It. 1721, f. 194, 201. Letts. I, 154; Corlieu, 21.

CHAPTER XI

THE DEATH OF FRANCIS II—CATHERINE REGENT OF FRANCE

Catherine was now forty-one and in that middle time of life of which Dante wrote, "When I had gone half-way on life's journey the path led into a thick woods and was lost." The dominant trait of her character, the will to power—had found circumstances so unfavorable to its development and had been kept so resolutely in the background, that its very existence was scarcely suspected even by those who stood nearest to her. She was now to show what she was and during the next dozen years to develop rapidly into something different.

The dangerous character of the King's illness had been concealed as much as possible and when he died the expectation was that the house of Guise would maintain their dominant position in the state, for they had "not only great forces in town but they have sent for more, which arrive daily little by little. The Constable is on his way and the Queen Mother has sent him word to hurry up. If the Guises at his coming find that they have the largest force, they will not fail to stand strongly for it, whatever it may cost them." [1]

Even if her husband had died less suddenly, it is not probable that Catherine would then have made any preparations to assume control of the government. Her courage to exercise her love of power grew with use; just as it is manifest that her self-reliance grew in later years. But now, warned of the danger of her son's death, Catherine was ready to forestall a second usurpation of power by the Guise and had made preparations to assume (equally against the ancient customs) the direction of the state. The death of

[1] Cal. F. 6 Dec. 1560.

Francis II took from the Cardinal of Lorraine and his brother the strongest support of their power, because, through their niece the young Queen, they had been able to control the feeble will of the King even against the advice of his mother. Catherine had brought up her children to the most exaggerated dependence and obedience. Turenne, who was educated at court with her youngest son, recalled afterwards a letter in which she told the boy not to trust entirely in his governor or any of his tutors but to express his inmost thoughts only to her. She had very much resented the fact that her oldest son had not looked to her as his chief adviser, and her lasting dislike of Mary, Queen of Scots, is sufficiently accounted for by the fact that Francis II had listened more to his wife than to his mother; without assuming the truth of the common report that Catherine always remembered with bitterness the fact that the young girl had once spoken of her scornfully as "a merchant's daughter." [1]

The new King, Charles IX, was only ten years old and Catherine prevented the possibility of anybody stepping in between them by sleeping in his room. The day after his brother's death, the young King summoned the princes of the blood, the Cardinals, the Dukes, the chief officers of state, and the members of the privy council to his room and announced that he desired them to do what his mother would command them, with the advice of the council. The five captains of the Guards and the Swiss were also summoned before him and ordered to obey his mother. All the chevaliers of the order of St. Michel and all the gentlemen of the royal household received similar commands. Four days later a royal letter announced: "The King has begged his very dear and well-beloved mother to take in hand the administration of the realm with the advice and counsel of his beloved uncle, the King of Navarre, and the royal council." The Spanish Ambassador reported to his master that he had heard from one of the members of the

[1] Bouillon. Cal. F. 1563, p. 278; Melville, 31; Cheruel ctd., 17.

royal council, the Cardinal of Tournon, that this action had been taken unanimously by the council; in which the houses of Bourbon and Montmorency had again taken their seats.[1]

One of Catherine's first acts was to release the Prince of Condé from prison. He took back his sword, cursing the Duke of Guise, which was only one of the reasons why the Venetian Ambassador did not believe that this seeming peace would last. "There are," he wrote, "many old enmities at court, especially between members of the house of Bourbon and the Guise and the Constable. . . . The Constable is of a nature which will accept no equal and the Cardinal of Lorraine will brook no superior . . . and the Cardinal is so hated by everyone that, if the general wish had anything to do with regulating the situation, not only would he have no power in the government, but perhaps he would not be left alive in the world." December 7th there were added to the royal council of the late King which had approved the command of Charles IX in regard to the constitution of the government, eleven more, chiefly old members of the council, under Francis I and Henry II.[2]

That the houses of Bourbon and Montmorency did not intend to become simply pawns in the Queen's game is evident from a conversation with the Constable reported by the Spanish Ambassador the 8th of December, 1560.

"The Constable said that, if the Queen Mother should want to use your Majesty's support and that of the Dukes of Savoy and Lorraine to maintain her authority, you ought not to make any move against the princes of the blood and the Constable who are the only ones who can oppose and be a counterweight to the Queen Mother's authority. But I do not believe that the Queen Mother can possibly oppose the King of Navarre, because the nobles and the people are entirely of his party. I am further of the opinion that, if she aroused any suspicion that she was calling in aid from outside the realm, it would be her ruin and perhaps a risk for the crown of her son; for it is thought almost

[1] Cal. F. 9 Dec. 1560, B. N. fds. fr. 7225, f. 31, A. N. K. 1493.
[2] A. N. K., Whitehead ctd., 90; B. N. It. 1723, f. 10, Valois, 180.

a crime of lese majesté to call in foreign troops for what concerns the government of this realm."[1]

These prophecies either of trouble or the second effacement of the authority of the Queen Mother by the substitution of Bourbon-Montmorency control for Guise control, were certainly plausible. Catherine was in a situation which she thus describes to her daughter, the Queen of Spain, "Left with three little children in a realm completely split up, without a single person sufficiently disinterested for me to be able to trust him entirely," but she played her cards so well that she won a complete victory. Confident of retaining the affection and obedience of her little son, she saw at a glance that the turning point in the whole situation lay in the will of the first prince of the blood, the King of Navarre. She therefore entered into secret negotiations with him while at the same time she manipulated the other members of the royal council. The result can be best described in her own words. Two weeks after the King's death she wrote to the French Ambassador at Madrid:

"Monsieur de Limoges: You will have learned by the last dispatch the unhappy accident which has happened to us, and I assure myself that you will have already judged how much that, added to my other sorrows, has increased my affliction, which I could not bear without the very great grace of our Lord. But as I have thought and know that He does everything for the best, I am resolved . . . to praise and thank Him for whatever He is pleased to send to me, hoping by His aid to nourish and bring up the young King whom He has left me the best way I can to His honor and glory, and for the good of the people whom He has put under his power. It has been found best by all the princes of the blood, the lords of the council and other great personages of this realm that the principal and sovereign authority in it should remain in my hands. . . ."[2]

On the same day she wrote more intimately to her daughter, the Queen of Spain:

[1] A. N. K. 1494, 1499, Dec. 8.
[2] Letts. I, 568, 569.

"Although I am compelled to have the King of Navarre next to me because the laws of this kingdom provide, when the King is a child, that the prince of the blood should be next to the mother, nevertheless . . . he is obedient to me and has no commands to give except what I permit him to give. And also I am recalling to my side the Constable and all the old servitors of your grandfather and father. . . . My daughter, my friend, you see the afflictions which it has pleased God to send me, which are greater than He has ever sent to anybody else. Nevertheless amidst all these sorrows He does me the grace to enable me to see your brother honored and obeyed and myself also and this kingdom's increase and union, which is to me a great comfort; but the greatest comfort is the hope which I have in you, who will surely keep the King your husband in the peace in which the King your brother has left this realm with him." [1]

Over all this satisfaction just one shadow rested. What would the Estates General do when they met? "The ancient custom of holding estates had been interrupted for nearly eighty years, so that the memory of man did not go back to them." Catherine probably did not know that the leading debater of the last Estates had denounced the flatterers "who attribute to the Prince that sovereignty which is only conferred by the people," and that the whole hall had resounded with murmurs of discontent when the Chancellor spoke "badly on the subject of the liberty and power of the people," but the letters partially cited show between the lines an uneasy consciousness that the Estates had claimed to regulate the regency for a minor King and that she had exactly reversed the understood rule of law in stating that the chief authority ought to come to the Queen Mother and that the first prince of the blood ought to be next under her. Nevertheless the desperate financial condition of the kingdom made the meeting of the Estates absolutely necessary.[2]

One danger indeed which might once have threatened, Catherine did not need to fear. The wild stories of the history attributed to de la Planche are not trustworthy, but

[1] Letts. I, 568.
[2] Recueil, 45, 50; Masselin, 147, 391.

there is good reason to believe that an attempt had been made before the King's death to pack the Estates and overawe them. We know that some deputies had been afraid to come because of the armed forces assembled in various parts of the kingdom. But local feeling was still very strong in France and very recalcitrant to any pressure from the center. In addition, the method of election was one which would have been rather difficult to manage: so that the packing of the Estates General would never have been an easy matter and whatever possible danger might have existed to Catherine's plans from an assembly partly packed or intimidated by the Guise, was utterly destroyed by the fact that they had lost by the death of Francis II the backing of the King. For the dominant force in French political life was the power of loyalty to the person of the King. Fifteen years before, the Venetian Ambassador had reported that "the French had put all their liberty in the power of the King, so that now their title, Reges Francorum, might truthfully be changed to Reges Servorum." At the time of which we are now writing another Ambassador wrote: "The power of the King in France is founded on a respect and love which reaches almost to adoration; a thing not only extraordinary, but absolutely unique, which can be seen nowhere else in the whole of Christendom." The Estates showed at the very beginning that they were free from any overmastering Guise influence, for when the clergy, who were favorable to the Cardinal of Lorraine, invited the other two Estates to join them in appointing him joint orator to address the King, they politely declined, preferring to elect their own orators.[1]

The Chancellor opened the Assembly with one of the greatest of his speeches, pointing out that, "although the King is neither obliged to take the advice nor to grant the complaints of his subjects, the purpose of the Estates is to enable him to know the truth and to do justice." There were three subjects on which the King wanted their advice,

[1] Neg. Fr. II, 489, Recueil; Rel. I, 1, p. 232.

religion, debts and the reform of the administration. "The realm is full of sedition, for which religion is alleged as a principal cause, a thing almost incredible that such evil should come out of good. It is no more permissible for a subject to defend himself against his prince than for a son to resist his father and it makes no difference whether the prince is good or bad, we are even more bound to obey him than a son his father. . . . The property of the King demands your help, for no orphan was ever left in so piteous a condition. . . . His Majesty and the Queen Mother further invite you to express with entire liberty your complaints and grievances." The Chancellor did not touch upon the fundamental question of the constitution of the regency during the minority of the King, and Catherine was taking rather a dangerous position before the Estates General, for she was asking their help while ignoring their authority.[1]

But here again events proved the practical wisdom of her action. The question was, indeed, not altogether ignored. The deputies from many baillages, disclaiming any intention of suggesting "that the Estates should give law to the King, Queen or Princes," asserted that it had been the custom at all times, when there was a minor King, that the government should be confirmed and authorized by the Estates, and asked (as they had been elected before the King's death) to be sent back to their constituents for instructions. Even this timid move to claim constitutional authority was speedily dropped and the supreme right to speak for her son which Catherine assumed in her message to the Estates, was practically endorsed in a letter to her by the Third Estate recognizing "the benefits we are sure to receive from the charge of the education and affairs of the King which God has put into your hands." [2]

But though the Estates had little to say about the usurpation of authority in constituting the regency they were outspoken enough about other matters. They painted

[1] Pièces, I, 42.
[2] Cahiers, I, 179; Pièces, I, 189.

in dark colors the condition of the Church and denounced a large number of abuses in the administration. They complained of intolerable taxation and described the resulting misery of the people. The greater part of these suggestions in regard to administration were finally embodied by l'Hospital in the great Ordonnance of Orleans and the supplementary Ordonnance of Roussillon and Moulins, establishing reforms in the methods of administration of church and state. Of the two hundred and seventy-five articles of these ordonnances, over one hundred and ninety were suggested by the cahiers or complaints of the Estates of Orleans. Many of these reforms were not, it is true, put into practice, but no Estates General exercised a larger influence on the administration of France. Catherine's policy of conciliation in the matter of religion was endorsed. The clergy indeed spoke in favor of a continuance of persecution. The nobility split, but two of their three cahiers show sympathy with toleration to the Reformed. The Third Estate demanded the stopping of persecution and charged heresy to neglect of duty by the clergy, whose flocks, uncared for by their pastors, had fallen into error for which they ought no longer to be punished.[1]

The failure of the Estates of Orleans to speak out boldly on the constitutional question of the right to constitute the government during the minority of a king, was in marked contrast to the utterances on this subject at the last Estates held seventy-six years before at Tours. This decline of boldness in asserting rights may have been the result of a general process. Bodin in 1576, combating the opinion that "the Estates of the people are greater than the King" says, "in short, all the discourses of the Estates contain nothing but subjection, service and obedience. The same thing was seen at the Estates of Orleans and it can not be said that in Spain there is any different usage, because the same submission and praises of subjection, service and obedience of the whole people toward the King of Spain as their sovereign

[1] Cahiers, I, 307.

Lord, appear in the discourse of the Estates held at Toledo in the year 1552." [1] Bodin's explanation of the silence of the Estates of Orleans may be the right one, but it may be suspected that the members who were willing to assert the constitutional rights of the Estates General during a regency preferred to do so under a direct mandate from their constituents and so forced a dismissal and reconvocation of the Estates.

They had little difficulty in doing this on the question of supply; for the debts of the Crown were enormous and a large proportion of them were at cutthroat interest. The Crown asked the clergy to agree to relieve the King by buying back the sources of income he had pledged as security and the Third Estate to vote an increase of the taxes. All over the world, wherever representative Estates met, the right of consent to taxation was claimed. Even Bodin, who thought both France and England absolute monarchies, assumed this right. "It is not," he says, "in the power of a king in the world to levy a tax on the people at his pleasure any more than to take the property of another." He was only echoing the idea of Commines, who at the end of the fifteenth century asked rhetorically, "Is there a king in the world who has the right to levy a cent of taxes on his subjects without consent, except by tyranny or violence?" As far as France was concerned, shrewd foreigners saw that this theoretical right of consent was entirely illusory. Sir John Fortescue, Chief Justice of the King's Bench under Henry VI, pointed out with pride in his work on "The Governance of England," that while an English King might not levy new taxes without the assent of Parliament, "the French King took upon him to set tailles and other impositions upon the Commons without the assent of the three Estates; but yet he would not set any such charges, nor hath set, upon the nobles, for fear of rebellion." A few years after Commines oratorically denied the arbitrary taxing power of the Crown, a man who like him knew by

[1] See Note.

practice affairs of state, Niccolo Machiavelli, visited France as an envoy of Florence. He writes: "The French people are submissive and hold their kings in great veneration. I have asked a great many people and they have all replied that the revenue of the Crown depended entirely upon the will of the King." It was the same a generation later when the Venetian Ambassador reports: "The present King can boast of far surpassing all his predecessors as well in making his subjects pay extraordinary taxes to any amount he wishes, etc., etc." But although the idea that consent was necessary to taxation had been in France only a remarkable instance of the persistence of a traditional theory of government in spite of practices which denied it, the Crown dared not, in view of the temper of the realm, refuse to recognize the formal assertion of it by the Estates. There was nothing for Catherine, acting in the name of the boy King, to do but dismiss them with orders to consult their constituents and reassemble at Melun the first of May.[1]

The Estates closed on the thirty-first day of January, 1561, and Catherine expressed her satisfaction that "they have confirmed in me the government and administration of the person of the King my son and of the realm." Even before this she had begun to take measures to suppress disorder. She wrote two letters to Tavannes, Lieutenant Governor of Burgundy, telling him that Maligny, the leader of the attempt to seize Lyons in the late conspiracy, was lurking in his house near Tonnerre, bidding him "at any price, even to battering down his house if it is necessary, to put his hand upon his collar and if you can get him, send him secretly to some place so safe and so hidden that no one can know where he is and at the same time send me word with the utmost quickness." She also wrote to the French Ambassador in Switzerland a long letter enclosing a letter from the King to the citizens of Geneva. The royal letter said:

[1] Bodin Rep. I, Ch. VIII; Fortescue, Ch. III; Machiavelli, I, 63; Rel. I, 1, p. 232; Pièces, I, 166, 194.

"The King has found that the terrible troubles of his kingdom had their active cause in the malice of some preachers, mostly sent by you or the chief ministers of your city, who have not only gone from house to house secretly impressing on the minds of the greater part of our subjects a pernicious and damnable disobedience, but by an infinite number of defamatory libels and by sermons in large assemblies have dared to incite our people to open rebellion." He begged them to recall these preachers and keep them from coming any more or "we will consider it a treacherous war on this kingdom and a just cause for quarrel before God and the world."[1]

But while the Government tried to stop the importation of heresy and to nip rebellion in the bud, it did not intend to oppose the unanimous wish of the Third Estate, backed by the sympathy of two-thirds of the nobility, that the policy of conciliation endorsed by the Assembly of Fontainebleau, but forced out of Catherine's hands for a time by the Guise, should be resumed.

Catherine knew that this policy would be very displeasing to her son-in-law, the King of Spain, whose support she was very anxious to retain. Indeed, he had already sent her an envoy charged to express his willingness to give his entire support to her authority, but ordered, "You must talk to Queen Catherine very clearly and very openly in regard to religion, telling her that she must never permit the new doctrines which have been planted within her realm to make greater progress in it." She wrote therefore a long letter to the French Ambassador at Madrid to explain the reasons for her policy.

"We have during twenty or thirty years tried cautery with the idea of cutting out the contagion of this evil from among us and we have seen by experience that violence has not served except to increase and multiply it. . . . It has been said by many people of good judgment that the worst means for suppressing these new opinions is the public death of those who hold them, because it was to be seen that they were strengthened by such spectacles. . . . I have been counselled by all the princes of the

[1] Letts. I, 161, 164, 574, B. N. Brienne, 205 f. 203.

[illegible] . . . [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

Catherine's deep dislike of the Guise was frankly expressed only to her daughter. Within a short time of these letters she wrote to the Duchess of Guise to express her "great trouble at hearing of the illness of her husband, because she is as anxious for his health and happiness as for her own." Curiously enough, therefore, she was exposed to a back-fire by the accusation that she was giving them too much influence in government. She had indeed gotten rid of the Cardinal of Lorraine, who returned to his bishopric about the middle of February, burdened, according to the Venetian Ambassador, "with the hatred of everybody because of his obstinacy, his vanity in conducting affairs, his changeableness and his proud and difficult manners." But no sooner was he gone than the Duke of Guise, his brother, began to rise in reputation and apparent influence.[1]

The consequence of this was a savage outbreak of the old jealousy of the Bourbon-Montmorency faction, aggravated by the desire of the Prince of Condé to obtain, not only the reversal of his late sentence to death for treason, but the punishment of those who had been concerned in inflicting it upon him. The consequence was that the King of Navarre said that, if the Duke of Guise didn't leave the court, he would, and the Constable backed him up. The Duke replied that although he had been entirely willing and even anxious to leave court before, now that the King of Navarre said that he must go, he wouldn't go. Whereupon the King of Navarre packed up his baggage, announced that he intended to leave and the Constable and all his followers proposed to follow him. In this desperate situation, which in the eyes of everybody threatened an outbreak of civil war, Catherine acted with the utmost tact. She sent the little King to the Constable, and the boy, calling him "Mon Compère" (the phrase which his father had always used), reminded him of how much King Henry had loved him and of the oath which he had taken never to desert the little son of his old master, and commanded him by his love for his

[1] B. N. It. 1723, f. 13.

father and that oath "not to leave me." Very much touched by this scene, the Constable interceded with the King of Navarre and persuaded him to recall the baggage which had already been dispatched. The Duke of Guise took up the olive-branch, said that he had always defended the innocence of the Prince of Condé (which of course was not in the least true) and recommended that all the documents in that case should be burnt. In this way a sort of peace was patched up.

The outcome was regarded as a complete victory for the Bourbon-Montmorency faction, and the whole court followed the winners. A few days later the Venetian Ambassador wrote: "Guise is much alone. It is true he always has with him some twenty men, mostly Italians, who follow him at a distance and never let him out of their sight. . . . It is certain that this government is full of jealousy and suspicion. It is to be feared that any small occasion may cause some great disturbance." [1]

[1] B. N. It. 1723, f. 15, 20 A. N. K. 1494, f. 50.

CHAPTER XII

CATHERINE DEFENDS HER AUTHORITY BY POLITICS

We have seen already that Catherine had probably been largely influenced in her decision to employ a new policy of conciliation of the Huguenots by her fears that the Queen of England might become involved in the civil troubles of France. Her fear of Spain was much greater than her fear of England and this fear, with the dislike which grew out of it as the years passed, remained one of the most constant secret motives of her life; in spite of the fact, perhaps because of the fact, that she was obliged repeatedly to turn to Philip for help. We must therefore understand the abrupt change in direction, joined to a somewhat subtle play of motives not obvious, of Philip's policy in regard to French factions.

Previous to this time the King of Spain had been much afraid of the Guise. During the lifetime of Henry II, Philip had naturally supported the Montmorency party because the Constable was the advocate of peace and the Guise of war, with Spain. Peace and the reign of Francis II had brought a new active cause for distrusting the Guise. They had been anxious during all that reign not only to support the authority of their niece Mary, Queen of France and of Scotland, but indirectly to back her claim as the orthodox and therefore only rightful heir to the throne of England. Elizabeth of England had, in consequence, felt obliged to support the Protestant party in Scotland against the orthodox party which was backed by French arms. Philip, on the other hand, in spite of his zeal for the ancient Church, was not at all anxious to see the crowns of Scotland, England and France united, lest the combination should be too strong for him. He therefore had been rather disposed to

stand by Elizabeth; at all events not to oppose her in Scotland. This is undoubtedly the explanation of the Guise action during the reign of Francis II which Catherine reported to her daughter as trying to make her son hate her son-in-law against all her efforts to keep them good friends.

But, with the year 1561, Philip began to change his attitude toward the factions of the French court. He had always distrusted the King of Navarre, perhaps because the King of Navarre had made all sorts of advances to him amounting even to treason, and he was now very much alarmed at the progress of heresy which made him afraid that his dominion of the Netherlands would be surrounded by three heretic kingdoms, Scotland, England and France. He therefore began to throw himself very heartily into the plan which had been suggested to him in 1559 by the Duke of Alva of making himself the head of the orthodox Roman Catholic party in France. But he was obliged to act very cautiously in this shift of alliance among the parties of the French court. The situation was a very uncertain and dangerous one and his political play must be very subtle if it would not defeat its own object.

In the south, particularly in Guienne, the adherents of reform were still acting with the utmost boldness in defiance of the laws, openly establishing their own worship and driving out the orthodox preachers in places where they were the stronger. Indeed, before the end of January the lieutenant of Guienne had written to Catherine that it was not possible to stop the scandals and troubles about religion by words. "The King must show himself the strongest." This violence on one side was more than matched by the violence of orthodox mobs in places where the Reformed, although in the minority, attempted to conduct open worship. For example, word was sent to Catherine from Nantes in February that somebody threw a stone through a window where preaching was going on and a mob then attacked the congregation on its way home. Seizing one man, they were about to kill him, when a quick-witted captain of the royal

galleys saved him by protesting that he was going to take him down to the harbor to drown him. Two contemporaries wrote: "Few cities in the realm are free from rioting about religion." "Neither party is willing to obey the royal proclamation forbidding all disputes about religion and all injuries one to the other either by word or deed." [1]

Much as Philip might object to the policy of meeting such a state of affairs by conciliation, and anxious as he might be to back now the faction of the Guise, who were in favor of a policy of rigorous persecution, he did not dare to oppose the authority of Catherine for fear it might be replaced, not by the rule of the Guise, but by the rule of the King of Navarre backed by the entire Huguenot party. Events showed that this fear was justified. Early in March it became evident that a strong constitutional objection, supported by the Bourbon and Montmorency factions and the Huguenot party, was to be raised against her authority with the intention of replacing her as head of the state by the King of Navarre, assisted by a royal council appointed by the Estates General.

The Estates General must be summoned again, for the Venetian Ambassador wrote "the scarcity of money is so great as to be almost incredible" and Catherine and de l'Hospital dared not strain further the breaking bow of the people's patience by unauthorized taxes. In the end of the winter the King ordered that delegates for the Estates General to meet the twentieth of March, should be elected but not in the ordinary way. Each province was to choose three representatives, one for each of the three orders of Clergy, Nobles and the Third Estate.[2]

A meeting of the Estates of the City and Provostry of Paris refused to give their delegates a mandate to pay the debts of the King or to buy back the royal domains "before it was made plain where so great a debt as forty-three

[1] B. N. C. C. C. 27 f. 27, 268, 287, 306, 308. Neg. Tosc. III, 447; Condé, I, 2, II, 3; de la Ferrière (3), qtd., 54.

[2] B. N. C. C. C. 394 f. 38, 45 It. 1721 f. 289 Port. Font. 297, f. 34, Clairambault 354 f. 306.

millions of francs had come from. It could not have been accumulated in twenty years if the finances had been well administered. After restitution of the undue and immense gifts which some have received to the oppression of the poor people, everybody will do his duty and help the King." This recalcitrant temper in the matter of finance was bad enough from Catherine's point of view, but something which alarmed her very much more remained behind. It is somewhat difficult to establish the exact terms of the resolutions that were passed. What looks like the original rough draft of them has survived in manuscript. A subsequent royal letter to the Parlement of Paris assumes that these resolutions were not passed, for it says, "some of the members amused themselves by discussing the matter of government and administration of this kingdom." But the mere discussion of propositions like the following threw Catherine into an agony of fear.[1]

"The government ought to be in the hands of the King of Navarre, leaving to the Queen the care of the person of the King. All the house of Guise should be not only removed from the councils of the King but separated from the company of his brothers, and, in order to make sure of governors for those princes whose sincerity and integrity will insure for them good and pious instruction, Admiral Coligny and President du Ferrier should be appointed as governors.

"All cardinals, bishops and other persons who have given an oath of allegiance to any other person besides the King, should be deprived of the power to sit in the royal council, even the Cardinal of Bourbon" (second prince of the blood). [At this point another hand has written in "unless he gives up the red hat."]

"The Marshal St. André shall not be of the royal council any more and shall give account of the excessive gifts which he received of the late King Henry.

"Members of the council outside of the princes of the blood are the Constable, the three Marshals of France and the Admiral and beyond that the Estates General should give advice.

[1] B. N. C. C. C. 252, f. 219, vol. 27, f. 349; Béthune, 8676, f. 8; pntd. summary Neg. Fr. II, B. N. It. 1723, f. 20, Cal. F. 1561, p. 42; A. N. K. 1494, f. 59.

"Everything done and decided at Orleans in the matter of government should be revoked because done by persons who had no power to act.

"Before they respond to what has been proposed to them, a legitimate council should be established around the person of the King and they give notice that if anything is attempted or ordered otherwise than by those who are made members of the council by the advice of the Estates General, they will appeal to the first meeting of the Estates General legitimately assembled on the ground that such action is null and void."

They asked that:

"The Chancellor should suspend the exercise of his office on the ground that he had not been appointed by the princes nominated to the council by the said Estates, and that all those who had conducted business of state since the death of Henry II should give an accounting and hand over the balances to be used in paying the debts of the King."[1]

It is small wonder that Catherine was very much alarmed. Here were requests and a tone in making them no Frenchman had ever heard—a tone no Englishman was to hear from any Parliament until the next century. It might be supposed that this discussion and its outcome was simply the result of the enormous Montmorency influence in the city of Paris, where about two thousand of the chief burghers were vassals of that house.[2] The Constable had received huge sums from Catherine's husband and the omission of his name from the list of those who were to give an accounting of what they had received from the exaggerated generosity of Henry II looks like it. Certainly Huguenot influence was behind these resolutions, because Coligny was nominated as one of those who were to have charge of the education of the young King. But although these influences undoubtedly gave the protest its form, events showed that it represented a feeling, and constitutional ideas widespread among French nobles.

[1] Summarized from B. N. C. C. C. 27, f. 344.
[2] Le Livre des Marchands, 454, 464, A. N. K. 1494 (62).

The effect it had upon Catherine appears in a letter written the latter half of March, to Monsieur d'Estampes in regard to the meeting of the provincial Estates of Brittany.

"My Cousin: Knowing that you are now engaged in closing up the Estates, where I do not doubt you have much to do to bring about results necessary for the establishment of my authority and at the same time for stopping the practices of those who are opposed to it, I want to advertise you of what has happened at Paris, both in the meeting of the Third Estate and in that of the nobility. . . . They disavowed all that was done at Orleans, on the ground that those who made that arrangement had no power from their constituents, and went on from that to elect a Governor of the realm, who is the King of Navarre. . . . You can think, my cousin . . . what shame and dishonor is done to me, to see myself deprived and dispossessed of that which was accorded me. . . . I have firmly determined rather than accept such a thing to endure poverty and I prefer, if they are going to take my honor, that they should take my life with it. And because I am unwilling to believe that in all parts of this kingdom the inclination is so strong for the party of those who wish to injure me as it has been in this small number of little burghers, I am not willing to accept as much evil treatment from all parts as I have endured from Paris. In order to prevent this, I beg you, my cousin, in the name of all you have always done for me and . . . the friendship which you know that I have for you . . . prove to me the fidelity you have toward me by preventing that diminution of authority and confirming what has been accorded to me by the Estates of Orleans. In which matter I beg you to omit nothing and do not fail to send me word at once of anything you may do and of what has happened; and above all give me information if the written instructions for carrying on the conspiracy which have been sent everywhere throughout the kingdom, have yet been sent to you."[1]

Catherine was fully aware that only great caution could avoid civil war. She did not want civil war at all. She was certainly too shrewd to enter upon it backed only by the Guise and foreign arms. She saw that again the chief piece in the game was the King of Navarre, the first prince of the

[1] Letts. I, 173 (misdated), Comp. B. N. Béthune, 8697, f. 1 C. C. C. 27, f. 314.

blood, under whose name and authority all elements of a somewhat diverse and varied opposition were united. By means of the wife of the Duke of Montpensier, she arranged a compromise with him. She signed an agreement to make him Lieutenant-General "as Monsieur de Guise was under the late King." "To do nothing without communicating with him" and that "he should be named in every letter where she was named." Letters from the Crown, from the King of Navarre and from Catherine setting forth the perfect accord which had now been established in the matter of the government, were at once sent to the Parlement of Paris and also published throughout the kingdom. Catherine wrote saying that this accord left the victory with her because "The King of Navarre consents that I should command absolutely everywhere without his ever being able to give me any trouble or hindrance. I still hold therefore the principal authority." How much of this entire satisfaction with the outcome was assumed in order to impress her son-in-law, is difficult to say. At all events, the Ambassadors of Venice and Spain thought that Catherine had restricted herself to dependence upon others and was in danger of coming by degrees to have nothing but the care of the person of the King and "God grant that she can still maintain herself in that." The English Ambassador, who was prejudiced on the other side, thought that Navarre had "agreed out of weak courage." [1]

What Catherine really thought about the cause of all this trouble we can see in the letter she wrote with her own hand to her daughter, the Queen of Spain:

"I want to tell you plainly what is the truth, that all this trouble has been for no other cause except for the hate which this entire realm has for the Cardinal of Lorraine and the Duke of Guise, because they thought that I wanted to put the government of this kingdom again into their hands; which I have assured them is not true, because I was under no obligation to do it, because you know how they treated me during the time of the

[1] B. N. fds. fr. 6620, f. 110, 3159, f. 8; A. N. K. 1494. Letts. X, 32; I, 177, 180; B. N. It. 1732, f. 32.

late King, your brother. So I have made up my mind to look to the safety of your brothers and my own safety and not to mix any longer their quarrels with mine, because, if they had been able to do it, they would have appointed themselves to power and would have left me to one side, as they always do everything which can bring them any grandeur and profit because they have nothing else but that in their hearts. I want to tell you all this detail in order that if, for the purpose of strengthening themselves by the support of the King, your husband, they send something secretly to make him believe that they have been put out of power because of religion . . . you can tell him the truth. The reason why they are disliked is because of the wrongs (sottises) which they have done to all the world, trying to make people believe that I was not a good Christian in order to bring me into suspicion in the minds of everyone and saying that it was because I wasn't a good Christian that I didn't trust them, telling me on the other hand that everybody was opposed to me and that without them I could not possibly remain in the authority where I am. And now that they see that I have come to know the truth, just the contrary to all that which they had told me, and that I wasn't hated except because I was supposed to like them, they are astonished." [1]

However sure Catherine felt herself, or pretended to feel herself, after this quick shift of the pieces in the game of court intrigue, she had no wish to see the representatives of the provinces meet in their new mood. She cared little for theories of government, constitutional or otherwise. The assertion of a constitutional or democratic theory of government seemed to her, not something to be intellectually discussed, but something like the appearance of a mental disease—an outbreak of contagious fever. But although she cared little for theories of government, she was glad to use certain phases that might help to gain her ends. Word was sent to the provincial Estates that they had no power to discuss government, but only the means of paying the King's debts. The provincial Estates were therefore called to meet again in June because "for most of the provinces the assembly which had been made was illegitimate." [2]

[1] Letts. I, 592.
[2] B. N. Béthune, 8676, f. 8.

Under these circumstances Philip felt that the best thing to do was to give Catherine his full support. He wrote telling her "she might count on him as she could on her own son" and did exactly what she asked him to do through her ambassador. He sent letters to the chief personages of the French court, the Cardinals of Tournon, Lorraine and Bourbon, the Constable, the Duke of Guise, the Duke of Montpensier and his wife, and Marshals St. André and Brissac, thanking them for the efforts they had made to "sustain the authority of the Queen, my mother," and begging them to continue such efforts whenever it might be necessary. Six similar letters were sent in blank to be addressed as Catherine preferred. Even before these letters could arrive, events seemed to confirm the Queen's contentment in the new arrangement of the government. In spite of his previous opinion the Venetian Ambassador reported on the 18th of April "there never has been such quiet and union at court. The King of Navarre recognizes the Queen Mother as his superior more than ever." [1]

But though peace prevailed for a time in the palace, it did not reign throughout the kingdom. Difference of opinion about religion continued to make very serious and widespread trouble. The Admiral Coligny had public preachings in his house which were attended by large numbers of people, to the great scandal of the orthodox. This ill-feeling finally broke out in a violent dispute in the royal council between the Admiral and the Cardinal of Tournon. The Admiral said he had as much right to have a preacher in his house as the Cardinal of Tournon to have a preacher in his. The Cardinal replied that the Admiral's preacher was excommunicated and that the houses where such sermons were heard ought to be burnt. The Admiral resented this and the quarrel was only appeased by the intervention of the Constable. Finally the Queen and his uncle the Constable sternly reproved the Admiral for his conduct and henceforth he held the meetings somewhat more secretly,

[1] A. N. K. 1495 f. 23, 30. B. N. It. 1723 f. 278.

but the Prince of Condé continued to have preaching in his rooms in the palace, not far from the rooms of the King. About this time Coligny's brother, the Cardinal of Châtillon, who although he still retained his rank of Cardinal, was known to be thoroughly in sympathy with the heretics, nearly lost his life in his own cathedral city of Beauvais. He rescued a Protestant preacher from a mob who were about to kill him and took him into his house. The house was then stormed by the people, some of its defenders were killed, the preacher was dragged out and burnt in the market-place and it was only by hiding that the Bishop was able to escape from the fury of the mob. In Paris a man was killed because he interrupted the sermon and criticized the preacher when he said that heretics ought to be killed. Near Lyons a mob seized a preacher, cut off his nose and ears and hands and hung him. In May, 1561, Calvin wrote to Beza, "In twenty cities, or about that number, the godly have been slaughtered by raging mobs. In only one has there been judicial action by magistrates." [1]

Orthodox observers were not so much impressed by these murders as by the spread of heresy and the violence of its adherents, who defied the law by holding public worship and even by suppressing Catholic worship where they were strong enough to do so. The Venetian Ambassador wrote in the middle of April: "The provinces, beginning with Normandy, passing through Brittany and Guienne as far as Provence, are openly professing this new religion and in the rest of the kingdom, although the common people appear in many places to be still Catholic, as they are here in Paris, nevertheless, the nobility are all, or the major part of them, infected. In court, with the exception of the Queen, the Constable, the Duke of Montpensier, the Duke of Guise and a few others, all the rest of the grandees, and the women no less than the men, either are of this new sect or else are of no sect." So far did the disorder go that he finally wrote home: "This once flourishing

[1] B. N. It. 1721, f. 273, 276, A. N. K. 1494 ib. f. 71, Baum pntd. App. 32.

kingdom has become so weak that its friends have nothing to hope or its enemies to fear from it." [1]

In this difficult position between a party anxious to persecute, whose fanatical adherents were able to act against the law through blood-thirsty mobs, and a party whose more extreme members were entirely unwilling to accept mere toleration and were apt to riot against legal worship wherever they were the stronger, Catherine tried to follow a line of conduct shown in the following letter to the royal prosecutor:

"I have seen by your letter of the 22d of this month that you are in trouble to know what response you should make to those who write to you in regard to illegal assemblies and also in regard to the sedition which may follow them. You should not fail to answer that the edicts and ordinances made about this matter regulate it and that they should follow them . . . without too curiously seeking out those who may be in their own houses, nor too exactly inquiring what they are doing there. I have sent the Marshal Montmorency to Paris to take steps about the sedition which has happened there and to inflict upon the leaders and authors of riots, without regard to their rank or their religion, such a stiff punishment that the others may take warning from it."

How serious she thought the situation is indicated by a letter which she wrote about the same time to her Ambassador with the Emperor.

"I have advised with my brother, the King of Navarre, and the other princes of the blood and the privy council of the King my son, and after having tried various means, at one time rigor and severity and at another time gentleness and clemency, I am convinced there is no better expedient to remedy our troubles than to assemble a national council of the Church to consider what ought to be done in regard to religion, . . . because so far as thinking it possible to retain this people in obedience and concord while their spirits are so agitated and occupied by diversities of opinion and of doctrines, there is no one in the world who does not judge it impossible." [2]

[1] B. N. It. 1723, f. 24, 25.
[2] Letts. I, 193.

The idea Catherine here expresses, that it was impossible to allow diversities of religion in a state, was a commonplace of contemporary political opinion which is to be found in various epigrammatic forms such as: "A new religion means a new Monarch"; "Two kings follow two religions"; "Diversity of faith has always put arms into subjects' hands." [1] There were no rulers and practically no political thinkers then alive, who would not have agreed with the opinion in regard to the toleration of dissenting worship which Michiele Soriano expressed in the Venetian Senate on his return from the mission to Spain in 1559. "Hence proceeds change of faith, the greatest revolution which can take place in a realm, because, besides the offense which is done our Lord God, there follows a revolution of customs, laws, obedience, finally of the state itself; as it can be seen has happened in Asia, in Africa, in Greece and in a great part of Europe." [2]

[1] Brant., IV, 294. Arch. C. 22. Davila, I, 243.
[2] Rel. I, 3, p. 359.

CHAPTER XIII

FORMING FACTIONS. THE HUGUENOTS SUPPORT CATHERINE, WHO FAVORS THEM

Although Catherine had put the administration of affairs of state into the hands of the Bourbon-Montmorency faction, she had not paid any attention to the demand made by the Estates of Paris that those of the house of Guise and all those who had been advanced by their influence, should be removed from the person and councils of the King. But in refusing to allow the Bourbon-Montmorency and those who followed them to drive the Guise entirely from court, she had kept in the game players quite capable of meeting her most skilful plays. Early in April, Guise made it evident that he had broken the Bourbon-Montmorency combination and was himself the center of a new combination, which came to be called the Triumvirate. The Triumvirate can best be defined in small space by borrowing a term from American politics. It was what is there called "a gentleman's agreement." Its existence was rather ostentatiously made known. The Spanish Ambassador reported on April 7th, 1561, that Guise, the Constable, Marshal St. André, the Duke of Montpensier (son of the King's tutor), the Prince de la Roche-Sur-Yon and the Cardinal of Tournon, took supper with the Constable after a solemn mass. "They bound themselves together and promised to seek, with a single zeal and one will, the remedy for the affairs of religion." [1]

Guise had split up the opposite faction. He had broken the Montmorency from the Châtillons; he had separated the elder Bourbons from some of the other princes of the

[1] A. N. K. 1494, B. 12, 73, 75, qtd. Decrue (2), 303, Croze 9, App., Bouillé, II, Ch. 3.

blood, and his skilful manipulation had made it evident that the chief line of cleavage for the civil war feared ever since the death of Henry II, would be on religion and not on politics or family jealousies. It is a proof of his political aptitude that the line of cleavage remained on the whole where he made it in 1561 until the formation of the Politique party after 1572.

Guise had carried out this great stroke by gaining the Constable and he had gained the Constable through his religious feelings. The stern old warrior and crafty courtier was intensely orthodox and he had determined rather than accept complete victory over his old enemies by the aid of heresy, to go over entirely to their side. In vain had his nephew the Admiral and his oldest son, the Marshal Montmorency, combated this resolution and begged him not to abandon so many members of his family and faithful servitors of his house. The Constable insisted, to the great joy of his wife, in acting in accord with his understanding of the ancient device of the arms of Montmorency, "God aids the first Christian." [1]

The powerful Guise-Montmorency-orthodox combination was made still stronger because it had the real sympathy of the King of Spain. Although Philip felt bound to act in support of the authority of the Queen Mother, because he was afraid that if he did not the younger-Bourbon, younger-Montmorency-heretic combination, might get control of the state, he did not at all like her policy of conciliation and accepted it only under protest. Guise began to use this influence with Spain as a lure to draw into his camp the King of Navarre, whose older brother, the Cardinal of Bourbon, was already strongly inclined to sympathize with the Triumvirate because of the question of religion. Navarre had no real convictions in regard to heresy or orthodoxy. He cared for nothing except a chance to get back trans-pyrenean Navarre from Spain, or to replace it by some other kingdom; for he had a desire to rule which

[1] La Place, 183.

was as strong as his ability for ruling was weak. He was therefore irresolute, now inclined toward orthodoxy with the Guise, the older Bourbon and the older Montmorency, now backsliding toward heresy with his younger brother Condé and the young Montmorency-Châtillons, but standing on the whole pretty steadily by the Queen Mother, whose influence with her son-in-law the King of Spain he still thought stronger than that of the Guise.

Catherine had not been very much alarmed by the formation of the Triumvirate. They spent most of their time away from the court and she felt, as she wrote to the Ambassador at Madrid toward the end of April, "I cannot say that there is nothing to be deplored in this kingdom nor on the other hand that I lack power to make all things go as they ought to go, and I cannot feel that my son the King ought to be afraid that anything may happen which would anger him so long as I hold, as I do, the two ends of the strap." [1]

She was well aware, however, that the Guise were trying to use Spain to increase their power. One thing they were trying to arrange was the marriage of their niece, the widow of Francis II, Mary Queen of Scots, to Don Carlos, the heir of the Spanish throne. Catherine disliked Mary, she hated the Guise, she wanted very much to marry her youngest daughter Margaret to Don Carlos. So her letters to Spain during the spring were filled with references to "the gentleman," which was her disguise for the name of Mary. She expresses herself most freely to her daughter, writing that if it is not possible to bring about the marriage of the prince and her sister, she ought to do all she can to arrange a marriage between the Prince of Spain and his aunt, the Princess of Portugal. Catherine urges her daughter to be sure to tell the Princess of Portugal that she would very much prefer the marriage to her brother, the King of France, and that the Prince of Spain should marry her little sister Margaret. But since that seems impossible, she is anxious to see the

[1] Letts. I, 191.

Princess of Portugal reach the highest possible rank and make a marriage which will keep them together all their lives. This line of conduct, Catherine points out, will have the double advantage of making a close friend of the Princess of Portugal and blocking the marriage of her sister-in-law Mary to Don Carlos.[1]

Another thing which Catherine desired to prevent was the Guise plan for gaining the King of Navarre. She kept writing therefore to the Ambassador and to her daughter, to urge the King of Spain either to return Navarre to the King of Navarre, or to give him an equivalent "something which isn't of importance to him, like Sardinia, or a new principality to be erected in Sienna." This latter plan had for Catherine the additional attraction of weakening the power of her distant cousin, Cosimo, the Duke of Florence, whom she always disliked, although she remained on very flattering terms with him. She put the real meaning of this manœuvre about the King of Navarre in the postscript in her own hand to a letter to the Ambassador she had dictated; for she was not unlike other women in her choice of the place to put the most important news in her letters.

"Although the King of Navarre puts on a good appearance of loving me, nevertheless I should be very glad if he could have his kingdom because, if he stays here, after getting it, he would then feel obliged to me and act even more in my interests and, if he should go away to rule it, still better, because he wouldn't trouble me any more here and there he might be of some use, in some way, to one of my children. You know without being told that you mustn't say this to the King when you are urging him to do it; but I tell you my whole design in order that you may the more readily employ all possible means to arrive at the end I seek." [2]

On the 15th of May the little King of France was crowned at Rheims. The Cardinal of Lorraine, who had consecrated his brother and his father, touched him with

[1] Letts. I, 591.
[2] Letts. I, 184, 596.

the sacred oil and years later, when he delivered the funeral oration for Charles IX, he recalled how the little boy, worn out by the five hours of the ceremony, had begun to cry, and when they asked why, said "The crown is too heavy." [1]

On their way to Rheims, Catherine and the King had visited the Duke of Guise. The Queen asked him if it was true that he had made a league to support religion, the King and her authority. Guise answered yes. Catherine then asked, "If she and her son should adopt the new religion," which she hastened to add with emphasis, "they had no thought of doing—would he and his confederates renounce their allegiance?" Guise answered, "Yes, although as long as they followed in the footsteps of their predecessors he was ready to die in their service." She was soon to have other signs of the effects of the opposition to her policy of concession and conciliation toward the Reformed churches. The King of Navarre quite openly went over to the Triumvirate; evidently influenced by conversations with the Spanish Ambassador in which it was hinted that he never could get back his kingdom by force, but might by an agreement to keep France Roman Catholic. Encouraged by his protection, the straight out orthodox party began decidedly to raise its head. The Parlement of Paris protested against the toleration of heretics, and the Sorbonne, the theological faculty of the University of Paris, declared they never would consent to the kingdom becoming heretic.[2]

When the King issued on the 19th of April, an edict which denounced the "penalty of the gallows without hope of pardon against all who were the cause of division among the subjects of the King on the subject of religion," including those who by use of "the words Papist and Huguenot and similar expressions caused irritation," the Parlement of Paris refused to register it. The Spanish Ambassador wrote a long letter protesting against it and in a very forcible private interview pointed out to Catherine the trouble that

[1] Bouillé, II, 557.
[2] Sp. Amb. qtd. Bouillé, II, 136. B. N. It. 1723 f. 26, 1721 f. 298.

would come on the kingdom "from trying to maintain an equal balance between the Catholics and heretics, because the heretics were increasing every day by such tolerance." [1]

The difficulty in carrying out any such edict is very well illustrated by a letter written to Catherine by the Bishop of Mans excusing the people for what, on his own showing, was a very bad riot in which a Huguenot had been killed by a mob attacking a heretic congregation returning from worship in the suburbs. He said the dead man was such a worthless character that his own mother disowned him; the last part of which was probably quite true because the hatred between orthodox and heretic was so great that it often destroyed family affection. The people had only acted out of zeal for the Church and because the judges were so lax in punishing heretics. "The only way to keep this city in peace and union is to pardon the offense. Then the adversaries of the Church . . . seeing that the King does not avenge their injuries, will bear themselves less insolently than they have; otherwise they will become too much puffed up and insupportable." [2]

On the other hand, letters addressed to her called for the punishment of "false prophets whose false doctrines poison souls" (the Roman Catholic preachers). These letters reminded the King, who had always loved Bible stories, of the young King Josias who had cleansed the land of idols and the writers changed his name, Charles de Valois, into the anagram, "Va Chasser l'idole." Situated between a faction who refused to agree that persecution should be stopped, and a faction whose extreme members scornfully refused to be satisfied with toleration, Catherine continued as best she could her policy of conciliation.[3]

The new party of strict orthodoxy and persecution were playing a waiting game. For about two months its leaders had been nearly always absent from court. Meanwhile

[1] Condé, II, 334. A. N. K. 1494.
[2] Condé, II, 340.
[3] Condé, II, 216, 222, 229, 251, 427.

there were "riots all over the kingdom," and what the Spanish Ambassador called "great insolence on the part of the heretics." He became more and more insistent with the Queen Mother that she should abandon the policy of conciliation, in particular that she should remove from the council Admiral Coligny and his brother, the Cardinal of Châtillon. The Queen refused to do this, saying that it would appear to be done by the influence of the Guise and would re-awaken all the old hatred against them. On the other hand, "if it came to be understood that it was done by the advice of the Spanish King or any other foreign prince, it would ruin her influence." That she judged correctly this general dislike of foreign dictation is shown by the fate of a certain priest who was arrested carrying a request to the King of Spain to intervene in France against the Protestants because they were too strong for the young King. The very Parlement of Paris which was protesting against the policy of conciliation, condemned him to kneel in public with his head and feet bare to demand pardon of the King, the realm and the Parlement, while his petition to the King of Spain was torn up in his presence.[1]

In view of the dangerous situation, a special meeting of the Parlement of Paris was called in the presence of the King, the princes of the blood and the royal council, in order to deliberate about what was to be done in regard to religion. The conclusion was finally reached by a majority of three that, until the meeting of a general council of the Church, cognizance of the crime of heresy should be placed in the hands of the ecclesiastical courts; but those who were found guilty and handed over to the secular arm for punishment could receive no greater sentence than banishment.

The Admiral and his friends were highly indignant over the result; but Guise, on the contrary, declared that his sword would never rest in his scabbard if it were necessary to enforce this edict. Catherine said nothing, but she had

[1] A. N. K. 1495 f. 49; De Thou, III, 80.

all the written expressions of opinion brought to her and burnt in her presence so that "they might not afterwards be used to anyone's hurt." When the edict announcing this decision appeared (the so-called Edict of July) both sides began to make trouble about it. The orthodox accused the Chancellor of having put in the phrase "Catholic Religion" instead of "Religion of the Roman Church," objected to the slight penalty inflicted on heresy and were angered at the implied hope that, at the meeting of a general council of the Church, more favorable terms might be obtained by the Huguenots. Some of the Reformed, on the other hand, demanded its revocation, although the Spanish Ambassador wrote: "It doesn't hurt them very much, because it is so weakly enforced." [1]

There was a cause for this laxity of which he knew nothing; for the Spanish Ambassador was never on the inside of what went on at court except in the secret councils of the extreme orthodox faction. Catherine evidently did not like the edict and she sent out written secret instructions to the magistrates which so pleased Merlin, the most influential of the Calvinist ministers in France, that he wrote a circular letter to all the churches, telling them that the prohibition of assemblies in the edict soon to be published did not really mean there could be no preaching; for small, quiet congregations would be allowed by the magistrates. Theodore Beza, Professor of Theology at the Academy of Geneva, who had become Calvin's right hand man, was in France for the conference of theologians which Catherine had arranged. He wrote to Calvin that "by the express orders of the Queen Mother" he was sending word to "our people" that they would be allowed to worship quietly in stated places and the governors would protect them. He blames highly the unbridled zeal of some of their followers. To this letter Calvin replied (Nov. 19th, 1561):

"What you write about the preposterous zeal of our brethren is exceedingly true. Everywhere I proclaim to them that, if I

[1] De Thou, III, 54; Pasquier (2), Bk. IV, L. 10. A. N. K. 1495 f. 62.

were a judge, I should punish not less severely these furious attacks than the King does by his edicts. . . . Nothing could be more equitable than the letter you have obtained. . . . I am especially delighted to hear that the Queen wishes to go through with the measure, because I think I am entitled to conclude that she is not acting craftily." [1]

This attitude of Catherine could not be long concealed and it began to be said that she favored the Huguenots entirely. The advice of the Admiral and his friends manifestly carried great weight with her and several of her favorite waiting women were known to like the Reformed doctrines. This atmosphere seems to have been felt by the youngest members of the court, and one day, when Catherine was in conference with the Cardinal of Ferrara in his room, the door was burst open and a procession of young princes poured in dressed as archbishops, bishops, abbots and monks. At its head on a little donkey rode the future Henry IV. The Cardinal laughed, and so did Catherine at first, but then she scolded them. She foresaw trouble and when the little King repeated the procession, promenading through the rooms and corridors in ecclesiastical regalia, there was a great scandal. The Nuncio complained to Catherine, who had great difficulty in passing it off as only the "foolish play of small children." [2]

The Estates General assembled at Pontoise the first of August in the extraordinary form of a very small number of representatives of the usual delegates of the orders of the provinces. Catherine had made strong efforts to control the elections in her own interests, but without very much success. At the beginning, the existing government was confronted with a difficulty in the refusal of the Estates to recognize a regency which had not been established by the representatives of the people. The reluctance of the Nobility and Clergy was soon overcome, but the Third Estate held out for some time, alleging that their mandate was to confide the authority to the princes of the blood. Largely by

[1] Delaborde pntd. 80. Lett. Calvin to Beza, 19 Nov., 1561.
[2] A. N. K. 1495, De Ruble (2), III, 223. Arch. C., VI, 5.

the influence of Admiral Coligny, they were induced to abandon this position and "praise and agree to the accord made between the Queen Mother and the King of Navarre, "very humbly supplicating the said lady (whose great virtues and large experience in the affairs of the kingdom they know) to continue in the government and the administration of the King's affairs." The nobility repeated the same formula of acknowledgment. They saved, however, the constitutional point that consent should not be made a precedent for the unauthorized assumption of a regency, by declaring that it was "only granted to the Queen Mother for her worthy personal qualities," and proceeded to make a series of assertions of fundamental parliamentary rights becoming apparent in a period of regency, some of which cannot be paralleled for strength and clearness by any utterance of an English parliament for nearly a hundred years.[1]

In answer to the question, "How to pay the King's debts?" the nobility and the Third Estate agreed that "since King Henry came to the throne the people have paid such heavy taxes that they cannot pay any more," but they recommended various plans of raising the money from the Church. The most sweeping was to sell all the clerical property of the kingdom, pay the debts out of the resulting capital, establish a big loan fund for the use of merchants, pay for the army and fortifications, and, with the remainder, estimated at about forty per cent of the income of the fund, support the clergy.

With such a temper as this among the representatives of the nobility and burghers, it is no wonder that the Crown could, after a little bickering, obtain a large concession from the Assembly of the Clergy which was meeting at the same time in the neighboring town of Poissy. They agreed to pay sixteen hundred thousand francs a year for six years and at the end of that time to begin the repayment of further debts amounting to seven and a half millions to be

[1] E. g. B. N. C. C. C. 27 f. 314. Béthune 8697 f. 1, Cal. F. 1561, p. 122, Cahiers. B. N. Fds. fr. 3970. It. 1723 f. 76, van Dyke reviews (1).

paid in ten years. This was not as much as the Queen Mother asked, but it relieved the most pressing necessities of the government.[1]

Thus the outcome of the Estates at Pontoise which the Queen Mother had so much feared, was the endorsement of her joint regency and authority with Navarre, and a large sum of money.

But with the outcome of the Council of the Church and the colloquy with the heretics held at Poissy, Catherine was very much disappointed. She had arranged this conference to take measures for the reform of the Church and to come to some agreement on doctrine with the heretics which might be laid before a general council as a basis for the reunion of Christendom, for Catherine was one of a number of people of importance then quite hopeful that the schism could be healed by mutual concession.[2] On the first point the assembly passed a series of excellent resolutions about the character and the method of election of the bishops and clergy. But it was only a surface reform. "God knows how all the prelates stand together and it isn't possible to make them agree to touch really the root of the evil." [3]

On the second point, a joint doctrinal agreement, no result was reached. Fourteen ministers, chiefly from Switzerland, supported by a score of delegates from the French Reformed churches, appeared to present and discuss their confession of faith. Before the colloquy opened, their leader, Theodore Beza, had a private conference with the Cardinal of Lorraine in the presence of the Queen Mother and the King of Navarre. The chief difficulty was about the doctrine of the mass. But at the conclusion of the talk, the Cardinal expressly declared to the Queen Mother that he was very well satisfied with what he heard from Beza and that he had strong hopes of a happy issue out of the colloquy.

Catherine never could quite understand theological dif-

[1] Recueil, I, 102, 103.
[2] Neg. Fr. II, 452, 608, 618.
[3] Contemporary comment.

ferences or why anybody should think them important. Although pious phrases appear constantly in her letters, it would be impossible (except for an occasional passing mention of the fact that she had been at mass) to tell from them whether she was a Catholic or a Protestant. The Venetian Ambassador, commenting on a conversation he had with her about this time, wrote home: "I do not believe that her majesty understands what the word 'dogma' means." [1]

Whatever hope of agreement might have been raised by the friendly preliminary interview of the leaders proved entirely illusory. When Beza began to explain to the whole council the Reformed doctrine of the Communion and said that in it "although the body of Christ was truly offered and communicated in a spiritual sense, it was, nevertheless, materially, as far from the bread and wine as the sky from the earth," cries of "blasphemy" broke out. Tournon, the dean of the cardinals, rose at once to demand of the Queen either that Beza should be silenced or that he and his friends should be allowed to retire from the room. When Beza had finished his address, the Queen Mother explained, in reply to the Cardinal of Tournon, that she had called this colloquy in accord with the advice of the royal council and the Parlement of Paris, not to change the doctrines of the Church or to make trouble, but to appease trouble arising from diversity of opinion in regard to religion, and to bring those who had wandered, back in to the true fold.

At a subsequent meeting the Cardinal of Lorraine delivered an address whose eloquence and logic was universally applauded by the orthodox party as absolutely unanswerable. The Reformed, on the other hand, spoke of it as a very defective piece of argument and the celebrated Ramus, a professor of the University of Paris, wrote a letter explaining that this speech of the Cardinal of Lorraine in favor of Catholicism had converted him from Catholicism to Protestantism. A private conference between three bishops and

[1] B. N. It. 1721 f. 338.

three Roman Catholic theologians and five of the leading Reformed ministers, resulted in a written formula in regard to the sacrament of the communion which all of them signed, but, when it was laid before the assembly on the 4th of October, it was rejected with anger and the colloquy broke up leaving the two parties more opposed to each other than before. This extreme hatred found its spokesman in the Spaniard, Lainez, General of the Jesuit order (newly introduced into France by the influence of the Cardinal of Lorraine), who, speaking in Italian, addressed to the Queen Mother reproaches which brought "the tears to her eyes" and threatened her with the ruin of the realm if she did not drive out these "wolves, foxes, serpents, and assassins." [1]

It was evident that the Estates of Pontoise, like the previous Estates of Orleans, had been dominated by those who had at least enough sympathy with the heretic churches to be unwilling to persecute them. The Third Estate had demanded that persecution on account of religion should cease except in the case of anabaptists, libertines and atheists, and that, in each city where it was needed, a temple should be granted for dissenting worship under the supervision of a royal officer; all secret assemblies and all violence either against the orthodox or dissenting worship being sternly repressed. In addition to this the General Synod of the illegal Reformed churches, held in March, had endorsed the fundamental proposition of the Estates of Pontoise that the Estates General of France had the right in case of a regency to establish the government and to nominate the royal council and that the Estates General ought not to take any action in regard to supply, or anything else, until this legitimate demand was acknowledged.[2]

We know exactly what Catherine thought about the action taken at Pontoise from a letter she told her secretary, de l'Aubespine, to write to his brother, the Ambassador at

[1] Waddington, 135; Bouillé qtd. Mss., II, 157.
[2] Cahier is B. N. fds. fr. 3970. Quick, Synodicon, 12.

Madrid. She did not see in it anything whatever except the results of court intrigue, because "as you know, the princes of the blood are offended and very much angered with each other and the relatives of 'the gentleman' (Mary Stuart) are always pushing the wheel of trouble." He proceeds:

"The Queen does not believe that the outward reconciliation which has been patched up between Condé and Guise is very strong. This poor kingdom is carrying dough to the oven and the Queen is greatly to be pitied because she does not please anybody and is little obeyed except when she gives people what they demand. I forgot to tell you also that the Estates say that, before any money is voted, those who had charge of the finances in the time of Francis I and Henry II and Francis II, must give an accounting of the immense gifts which they have received. The Constable kicks like a horse and in spite of his league he don't know where he is, because he thought to cover over everything with the mantle of religion, as, to speak truly, the others do also, and they are blowing the fire as much as they can in order to strike fear to the heart of the Queen, who commanded me last night to write this long letter because she hasn't time. Last night at midnight Guise and the Constable tried to frighten the Queen Mother about all these things, saying that it was plain that the Catholics were arming and that there was immediate danger of seeing the kingdom divided by civil war. God grant that all may turn out well, but we live in terrible times."

The evident strength of the friends of the Reformed religion in the Estates of Pontoise and the fact that the influence of the Admiral Coligny among the deputies had diverted the attacks upon her own authority, inclined Catherine to let the Reformed party have their own way at court. The Spanish Ambassador wrote the beginning of September, 1561, "There is no hope for religion in this realm and I don't know what to think of the Queen Mother, who lets herself be managed at the pleasure of these heretics. All who have influence with her, men and women, are of these evil opinions. They don't conceal it and she can't be ignorant of it." [1]

[1] B. N. fds. fr. 6618 f. 4. A. N. K. 1494.

During the whole month of October, news kept coming up from the provinces of the forcible seizure of churches by the Reformed, accompanied by a quite widespread outbreak of what historians have come to speak of under the technical term of "iconoclasm." This is a form of mob hysteria which has repeated itself in various other times and places, as for instance at the time of the French Revolution, when religious zeal was not an element. It showed itself in the systematic breaking and destruction, without any private plundering, of all statues, pictures and other ornaments of the churches. This violence was openly denounced by all the leaders of the reform. Calvin insisted that a minister who had led an iconoclastic mob should be expelled from the church. The four thousand Huguenot gentlemen who a little later signed a pact with Condé, bound themselves among other things to oppose all breaking of images and sacking of churches. But these exhortations were not able to check the practice and many of the Reformed ministers seemed to come to see in it some sort of mysterious movement of the Spirit of God and to speak only half-heartedly in reproving it. As for instance when Beza writes to the Queen of Navarre that "the breaking of images has always been displeasing to him—the more so because it seems to him that it has no foundation in the word of God. . . . Nevertheless, because the act in itself is according to the will of God, who condemns idols and idolaters and because it appears that in a thing so general there may be some secret design of God . . . I am content to reprove it in a general way and to moderate such impetuosity as much as I can." [1]

The government replied to this news of law breaking by ordering all governors to go to their provinces and passing other repressive measures. These orders passed unanimously without opposition from members known to sympathize with the heretics and in many places they were not

[1] B. N. fds. fr. 3158 f. 38, It. 1732 f. 93. C. C. C. X A. N. K. 1495, Oct. 13. Calvin to Church of Sauve; Condé, II, 359.

at all enforced. It was therefore charged that a secret understanding assured the Huguenots that, if they stopped rioting, they would be quietly allowed to worship and, as we have seen, such an agreement had actually been made by Catherine with the leading Reformed ministers.

But no one who knows the sixteenth century can suppose for a moment that what the Huguenot churches really wanted was simply liberty to worship. They looked forward ultimately to the substitution of their worship for Roman Catholic worship and such a suppression of orthodoxy and the ancient rites as had taken place in England. The Huguenot chiefs wished to break the power of the Guise and to reject the claim of Spain to dominate in French religious concerns. Calvinist, nationalist and anti-Spanish feeling throughout the nation at large combined, therefore, at the moment, to strengthen the anti-Guise faction, now basking in the full light of royal favor, and the Triumvirate, finding themselves decidedly overmatched, began to make conciliatory movements. In the end of August Guise had even yielded to the urging of the Queen Mother and gone through, in the room of the Constable, a formal scene of reconciliation with Condé. The Cardinal of Lorraine, who was by conviction a Gallican and a liberal in theology, began to throw his influence into the stream of nationalist feeling. He spoke in favor of a national council. He was quoted as wishing to cut off the French annates from the papal treasury and he had strenuous words with the Legate. A sure sign that he really faltered in unquestioning support of the extreme papal party is the fact that the ultramontanes did to him what they always did to any one who failed to back entirely their policy, accused him of secret heresy and irreligion—which is what every ultra-orthodox faction in every religious organization, Christian or pagan, has always been prone to do to any of their own adherents who became independent enough to vary from their entire program. It was whispered around that the Cardinal of Lorraine was becoming a schismatic, who

wanted to withdraw France from the Roman obedience and a heretic who had doubts about the doctrine of transubstantiation.[1]

But all these efforts of the Guise to further divide their adversaries or divert their support were futile. The younger Bourbon-Montmorency-Châtillon combination stood firm. The King of Navarre had again changed his inclination, apparently with the idea that, after all, he could get more out of Catherine than anyone else. She was entirely favorable to the influences which had endorsed her authority and Calvinism became the reigning fashion at court. Zealous churchmen feared, and the fear was no mere unreasonable panic, that the Valois might try to imitate the Tudors and set up a Gallican Church like the Anglican Church. The Guise gave up the struggle and made up their minds to watch events. On the 20th of October they left court with all their adherents in a great company of more than six hundred horse. Two days later the Constable retired to his Estates and the Marshals de Brissac and St. André went with him. Spain had shown very plainly a willingness to help the Triumvirate in any attempt to force the French Crown back to the policy of persecution. Philip sent word to Catherine that he could not allow heresy to increase in France because of the danger of infecting the Netherlands. He had offered her money and troops to help suppress it. "She ought not therefore to take it ill if for the service of God . . . and of all Christendom he assisted the Lord's people and the Estates of your kingdom who are Catholic . . . and he would put his life and all he had on the hazard of that die." To this warning letter Philip added a phrase which subsequent events made somewhat significant. "Great care must be taken about the instruction of the King, lest he too be infected with heresy." From the orthodox point of view there was need of the warning. It was reported to the English court that the little King himself asked his heretic cousin, the Queen of Navarre, if the mass

[1] B. N. It. 1721 f. 334 f. 93.

was true, and suggested that his cousins need not come unless they believed in it.[1]

The attempt on the part of some of the Catholic party to meet this danger that the princes might become Huguenots, resulted in a plot which filled Catherine with fear and anger. It was nothing less than a plan to carry off the heir to the throne, her second son, perhaps with the intention of bringing the boy up to serve as a future head for the orthodox party. Catherine could never get to the bottom of the affair in spite of all her efforts to do so, but it is evident that there was something behind the few facts that she knew.

Among the adherents of the Guise in the cavalcade which followed them on their departure from court, had been the brilliant Duke of Nemours, a cadet of the ruling house of Savoy. A splendid man of the world and an able soldier, Nemours did not depreciate his own value. He was as successful with women as he was heartless. After betraying his fiancée, Mademoiselle de Rohan, under promise of marriage, he was finally to marry a fortune with the widow of the Duke of Guise. Before leaving court on the 20th of October he had tried to persuade the heir to the throne, the future Henry III, to steal away and leave France with him. The little boy told the royal council what happened and signed his deposition in a big, round hand. He said that Nemours had taken him near to a chest in the room of the King and asked him if he was a Huguenot. He said, "No," that he was of the religion of his mother. Behind the tapestry nearby were Denise and Marguerite, waiting-women of the Queen. He then took him to the other side of the room and said, "There's a great deal of trouble in the kingdom and you're not safe here because the King of Navarre and the Prince of Condé want to make themselves King and want to kill you. If you like, I'll take you to Lorraine or to Savoy, where you'll be safe." He answered that he didn't want to leave the King nor

[1] Neg. Tosc. III, 466, Cal. F. 1561, p. 397, 415. B. N. It. 1723 f. 101.

his mother, the Queen. Nemours also told him, "Remember, when the Duke of Guise is leaving, to say to him, 'My cousin, if you can't take me with you now, I beg of you to come when I have need of you.'" The boy was strictly charged not to say anything about this to the Queen or to his tutors, and "If they ask you what it is that I have been talking to you about, say that I was talking to you about the comedies," and on leaving, Nemours said, "Remember what I have told you." Nemours escaped arrest and Catherine could not find him, though she looked for him high and low.[1]

The Duke of Guise and the King of Spain expressed the utmost abhorrence of any such attempt and all Catherine's efforts could get no evidence to implicate them in it, but it did not increase her love for either of them. The thing she feared most in the world was any attempt to weaken her children's dependence on her. She had long secretly hated the house of Guise and probably her deep dislike of her son-in-law, the King of Spain, which she continued to mask under flattering phrases, dates from this time. She was willing for a while to rest completely on the support of Coligny, Condé and the Huguenots. The Triumvirate kept itself very carefully in the background away from court. Guise wrote to the Constable that he and his brother spent all of their time hunting "and my talk is of nothing but dogs and hawks." [2]

[1] Brant., B. N. fds. fr. 6608; the original. The copy pntd. Letts. I, 246, varies seriously.

[2] B. N. fds. fr. 6626 f. 51.

CHAPTER XIV

MURDER AND RIOT. THE EDICT OF JANUARY LEGALIZES THE REFORMED WORSHIP

Meantime disorder increased in various parts of France. Two things which happened within a week will serve as specimens. On the 19th of November a mob in the city of Cahors attacked a house in which Huguenots were worshipping, set it on fire, killed fifty of the worshippers, dragged many of the corpses through the street, and finally burnt a great pile of them in the public square. On the 24th of November a mob of peasants stormed the castle of Baron Fumel, who had tried to prevent a Huguenot minister from preaching before his vassals, killed him in the presence of his wife, and plundered his château. Catherine wrote to the widow the following letter: "Madame de Fumel: Having heard of the cruel and inhumane death of Monsieur de Fumel your husband, I have been filled with the sorrow and regret which you can imagine, not only because the King my son has lost a good servitor, but on your account. For that reason you can assure yourself that I will put my hand to such a cruel and rigorous punishment of the authors of so evil an act that it shall never be forgotten. So far as you are concerned, believe that I will look after you and your children as his services merited. I have already sent the order of the King for six hundred francs of pension for your oldest son. I am satisfied that your youngest son should have the Abbey of Bonneval, as you demand, and so far as your daughters are concerned, send them to me and I will take them to bring up in my house." The accounts of this murder given by Huguenot writers half excuse the act, saying that Fumel was an exceedingly cruel seigneur, who was killed during the storming and the plun-

dering of the château by two sons of vassals who had suffered particularly under his tyranny: "Reserved, as it seems, for that justice of God by a singular providence." [1]

These and a number of similar acts of violence took place in the Province of Guienne, which, according to all reports, was rapidly drifting into a state of desperate civil war. The Queen sent down two civil commissioners and an old soldier who had served under her husband in the Italian wars, Blaise de Monluc, to support them with military force. Their instructions were to execute even justice on both sides, to appease the province and to use force only where it was necessary: "The King, hoping more from prudence and dexterity than from force." [2]

Monluc found in Guienne an attitude among the adherents of the Reform, to which he had previously been somewhat inclined, which helped to turn him into a most determined enemy of the Huguenot cause. It was a political or social attitude not shared by the members of the Huguenot party in general, but worthy of attention because many others besides Monluc thought and charged that it was not exceptional, but characteristic of the Huguenot party and of Calvinism in general. He tells the story in his vivacious memoirs, which, although distorted and disfigured by colossal vanity, are not untrustworthy. His explanation to account for his change of side, is that a minister came to him and offered him, in the name of the Reformed churches, a good present of money and the support of four thousand paid foot-soldiers. Monluc says he refused the present and then asked him who dared to enroll soldiers without the express permission of the Queen Mother? "Then I commenced to swear and grabbed him by the collar, saying these words, 'I don't know what keeps me from hanging you myself to the bars of this window, you miserable scoundrel, because I have strangled with my own hands at least a score of better men than you are.' He left me, having had

[1] B. N. fds. fr. 15877 f. 452. Tortorel, Letts. I, 260. Hist. Ecc., I, 886.
[2] B. N. fds. fr. 15875, f. qtd. Courteault (2), 403.

the most beautiful fear that he had ever experienced." Meeting later one of his old soldiers who told him that the church at Nerac had made him their captain, Monluc called out, "And what the devil are these churches who make captains?" [1]

Monluc made up his mind that a man by the name of Verdier was one of the leaders of sedition in Guienne. He therefore had him arrested, together with three others. A certain gentleman had told him that when he had remonstrated with these men before the consuls of the city, that the King would find their conduct evil, they had answered, "What King? We are King. He is nothing but a dirty little kinglet. We'll give him the whip and teach him to earn his living as other people do." Monluc believed they had repeated similar language elsewhere. When he met the culprits he had two executioners behind him, with sharp swords. The consuls, after some hesitation, confirmed the testimony which had been given in regard to the words used by these men about the King. Whereupon Monluc says he called out:

"'You miserable scoundrel, have you really dared to soil your wicked tongue by speaking against the majesty of your King?' He answered, 'Oh, sir, have pity on a miserable sinner!' I seized him and pushed him rudely to the earth and his head fell exactly upon a piece of the base of a cross which had been broken off in a Huguenot riot. I called out to the executioner, 'Strike, fellow.' My words and his blow followed one upon the other and it carried off more than a half a foot of the stone at the base of the cross. I had the other two hung to an elm that stood just opposite, and because the fourth (a deacon of the church) was only eighteen years old, I did not want to put him to death, but I had him given so many blows of the whip by the executioners that I am told he died ten or twelve days afterwards. That was the first execution that I made without sentence or putting pen to paper, because in this sort of affair I have heard that it is best to commence with an execution. If all of those who had authority in the provinces had done the

[1] Courteault (2), 390, 391; Rel. I, 4, p. 137.

same thing, the fire would have been put out which has since burnt everything." [1]

While elsewhere the nobility had become the dominating element in the Huguenot party, in Guienne (the only province where many of the peasants were converted to the Reformed doctrine) the movement took a distinctly anti-feudal and anti-royal character. "The nobles became afraid to go hunting, for the peasants killed their dogs before their eyes and they didn't dare to say a word for fear of their lives." "If a lord dared to resist, word was sent to the churches and within four or five hours he was either dead, hidden or flying for his life to the city of Toulouse, the only place where he could be safe." [2] This tendency towards democracy and social revolution in the province of Guienne was much blamed by the leaders of the Reformed Churches, both intellectual and political, like Calvin, Beza, Coligny and Condé, but this early local tendency continued for a long time to be cited in support and justification of the assertion of the orthodox that revolution in the Church meant revolution in the whole fabric of human society.

The members of the Triumvirate, although staying away from court, were getting ready, if necessary, to wage civil war in defense of the exclusive right of the old religion to exist in France, and to block what they feared was the intention of the Huguenot party to make France follow England in the road of schism and the establishment of a national Church. They very skilfully began their preparations by negotiations with the King of Navarre. Catherine knew very well the danger that they would work upon his ambition and so draw him over again to their side and she again did her best to get the King of Spain to allow her to promise to give him back Spanish Navarre or to replace it by some other kingdom. But Philip played with the offer and wasted time.[3]

[1] Courteault (1), I, pp. 416, 425.
[2] Monluc.
[3] A. N. K. 1494, ff. 18, 21.

On the other side, however, Navarre was plied with every sort of argument. If he would declare himself a Catholic, the King of Spain would, at the intercession of the Pope, give him back Spanish Navarre or else make him King of Sardinia, or at least give him a new kingdom in Tunis. It was even pointed out to him that the celebrated soothsayer, Nostradamus, had predicted that Catherine would see all her sons on the throne of France. This implied that they were all to die in rather rapid succession and, on their death, he would be the next heir. If he were a heretic, he could not possibly succeed. The consequence was that in the end of December the unstable King, chasing his rainbow kingdom filled with castles in Spain, gave up attending the preachings, began to go to mass, and bound himself closely to the policy of the Triumvirate.[1]

Catherine was very much worried by this defection, which formed in France a solid party certainly opposed to her policy, probably opposed to her authority, supported by a big league of the Roman Catholic nobility in Guienne and backed by the King of Spain, the Pope and certain of the Roman Catholic princes of Germany. She therefore did two things: first, she requested Coligny and the other leaders of the Reform party to give her a list of the Reformed churches and to inquire what forces they could put in the field in case she needed their support. The Admiral wrote at once to all the provinces, exhorting the ministers to send him a written list of all the secret churches who professed the Reformed religion. The replies showed that there were about two thousand five hundred such churches in France, which asked to be granted places of worship and offered to the King "both life and goods" if he needed them. In reply the Queen secretly ordered that each minister should read in his church at the hour of the sermon the following written appeal: "Inasmuch as many reports are current that strangers, under pretense of the Roman religion

[1] Castelnau, Bk. III, Ch. 6; Rel. I, 4, p. 60; Cal. F., Dec., 1561, A. N. K. 1497, Jan., 1562.

which they say they wish to maintain, are planning to enter this kingdom and take possession of it, it is the duty of all faithful subjects to show the entire goodwill which they have to their King. But above all, because such a quarrel which these aliens allege as a pretext seems to be directed against those whom they call of the new religion, there is the more reason that we should make a manifest demonstration that we would not spare either our lives or our goods to maintain the state and grandeur of our King. And in order to make this demonstration it is necessary that in this church, we consider as soon as possible what offer it can make to the King, of men, either infantry or cavalry which it can support at its expense . . . to maintain the Crown of the realm against those who would wish to invade it under the pretext of religion. All must be done in the fear of God without any disorder . . . so that even those who hold another religion may not have any justification to accuse us as the authors of any sedition or riot." [1]

The second thing that Catherine did was to write a long letter to the King of Spain, in which she endeavored to dissuade him from supporting the party opposed to her policy of conciliation. Replying to his statement that the Catholics, persecuted on all sides, had no refuge except in him, she denies both the fact and the conclusion and goes on: "But religion is a cover which they use to hide an evil intention, and for that reason I beg you, my son, examine well the real intentions of those who make use of that mantle and nevertheless have nothing less than religion in their hearts. . . . That's the whole truth, my son, which I have wanted to write you in this letter in order that you might be able to know really how little reason anybody has to be malcontent."

None of this pressure succeeded in making Catherine waver in her policy of conciliation, which seemed after all best fitted to save her own authority and preserve the throne of her infant son. But she called another Assembly of the

[1] Hist. Ecc., 744, Bk. IV.

Notables, consisting of the chief personages from each parlement of the kingdom, the royal council and the princes of the blood, which finally opened on the 3rd of January, 1562. The family of Guise, the Constable and their most notable adherents were conspicuous by their absence. There was no unanimity of opinion. Of eleven presidents of parlements who spoke, five were strongly Roman Catholic, three were entirely opposed to the orthodox doctrine and three were so neutral that no one could tell exactly where they stood. The Provost of the Merchants of Paris appeared at one meeting, accompanied by two hundred of the principal burghers of the city. He spoke in such a way as to make it appear that there was no uniformity of sentiment among that delegation. The assembly as a whole was very strongly in favor of the policy of conciliation. Catherine felt obliged to moderate their views and it was only her strong hand joined to that of the King of Navarre, which kept them from voting that the Huguenots should have churches assigned to them throughout the kingdom. The Nuncio reported: "It is said no orator ever expressed himself with greater eloquence, energy and success than the Queen. She has since said herself that it seemed to her at the time as if God was dictating to her the very words she used." [1]

The edict which was approved, called the Edict of January, while not indeed putting the Reformed church on the same basis as the orthodox church, did give it for the first time a legal standing in France. It was provided that those of the new religion should immediately surrender all the churches they had seized and return all the ornaments and other church property which they had removed from them. They were permitted to select places of worship outside the walls of the cities in which they lived and the magistrates were to see to it that they were not interfered with, either in going to worship or returning from it. Men

[1] Letts. I, 264. Hist. Ecc., 751, n. 2. Pasquier (2), I, 91; Arch. C. VI, 20, 24; Nuncio. Condé, II, 20; Neg. Tosc. III, 472.

of both religions were forbidden to irritate each other by the use of reproaches and evil words, especially in sermons. No synods or consistories were to be held by the new church except by permission and a royal officer was to be always allowed, if he desired, to attend all assemblies. No one of either religion was to carry any arms except the sword and dagger usual with gentlemen.

This was less than the Reformed churches would have liked, but "the ministers and deputies of the churches of France who were at court" received it thankfully and sent it out to the churches with annotations, bidding them strictly observe all its commands and agreements. The Legate and the Nuncio also accepted it as better than they had feared.[1]

Opposition of three sorts at once began to appear. Even before the deliberations of the assembly were over, the Spanish Ambassador attacked the Queen Mother, saying that "the proposition which had been made the day before by the Chancellor l'Hospital would bring the total ruin of the kingdom and the great displeasure of the King his master and all princes who loved the ancient religion." The Queen answered, after asking him how he knew so much about what went on in the private council of the King; "in the first place he ought to know that people who would be willing to betray their royal master in that way would probably not tell the truth. These busybodies were trying to make trouble between his master and her and if he was a loyal servant he wouldn't hesitate to tell their names because they were doing as much harm to the King his master as they were doing to the King their own master; for the war which they were trying to stir up would be equally dangerous to both. Although she was a woman and the King was a young child, nevertheless France was not lacking in forces and in means to defend herself and to resist those who might wish to attack her." The Ambassador replied that this was only the gossip of the pages.

[1] Condé, III, 93. Arch. C. VI, 30.

The Queen said that it could not have been that because no pages were present in the conference. The Ambassador then ventured to animadvert upon the education of the King and his brother, to whom people were allowed to say anything they chose in regard to religion. The Queen became furious, saying that it was none of his business. She knew that his only object was to stir up trouble between his master and her. Her children were so obedient that they told her everything that anybody said to them . . . and she would bring them up in such a way that every person of a good heart would some day feel toward her the greatest gratitude. But though she spoke so sharply to an Ambassador she thought insolent, Catherine was evidently a little nervous about the result, for she immediately wrote to the French Ambassador a letter in which she insisted upon her great friendship for the King of Spain and her confidence in his friendship toward her.[1]

It is difficult to believe that Catherine was quite sincere in the assurance she gave in regard to the education of her children being quite in accord with what the King of Spain would like. She herself had given the little King a Huguenot book of psalms, telling him not to speak of it to anybody. But the boy showed it to his tutor, Cypierre. He took it away from him, telling him at the same time that a man ought not to obey women. He then reported the incident to the Constable. Catherine was very much enraged. She dismissed Cypierre and appointed the Prince de la Roche-sur-Yon tutor of the young King and joined to him the mother-in-law of the Prince of Condé and one of her women-in-waiting, Madame de Crussol, two ladies who were most pronounced Huguenots. Little Charles IX was very much attached to his tutor and on the night when the change was made would scarcely eat anything; saying when his mother tried to comfort him that he didn't want any other tutor except Monsieur Cypierre. The next morning the new tutor, after having saluted the King, asked him

[1] Condé, II, 601; Letts. I, 613.

to come and play in the grand rooms as he was accustomed to do, to which he responded that he didn't want to play, and went to mass. He proved very recalcitrant to the new atmosphere. While preaching was going on in the room of the Queen of Navarre, a most devoted adherent of the Reformed religion, the King happened to pass by the door. He stopped and knocked three or four times until the door was opened. Standing in the doorway he said: "Don't make any mistake about it; if you keep on preaching this way you will every one of you be burnt." [1]

But his younger brother, the future Henry III, was very much less resistant to the influences which were now entirely prevalent at Court. His governor, Carnavalet, was a Huguenot and the boy formed the habit of going around saying to everyone, "I am the little Huguenot, but by and by I will be the big Huguenot." He did his best to convert his younger sister, Margaret, who wrote in her memoirs:

"My brother, afterwards the King of France, could not avoid being impressed by the unhappy Hugonoterie. He was always urging me to change my religion, often threw my prayerbooks in the fire and instead of them gave me psalms and Huguenot prayers, compelling me to carry them. I answered his threats by bursting into tears, because I was at the very tender age of seven or eight years. He answered that he could have me whipped or killed if he wanted. I answered him that he could have me whipped or have me killed if he chose to, but that I would suffer everything that could be done to me rather than damn my soul." [2]

While it is not probable that Catherine actually contemplated bringing her children up as Huguenots, it is quite certain Coligny was right when he told the English Ambassador about this time that the Queen Mother was anxious to have such modifications and liberties established in the Church as might content the Protestants and bring about the reunion of Christendom. It was to help this plan that she restored Cypierre as one of the tutors of the King,

[1] Neg. Tosc. III, 471, Cal. F. 1562, p. 384.
[2] A. N. K. 1571 f. 71, 1497 Feb. 3, 9, Margaret 6,

ordered all her waiting women to live in the same religion she did or they would be dismissed and stopped all Calvinist preaching in the private apartments of the palace. The concessions she wished made to the schismatics are undoubtedly described in a letter which was written to the Pope about this time by the Bishop of Valence, entitled: "Remonstrances made to Pope Pius IV by the King, Charles IX." [1]

It besought the Holy Father, the common Father of all, to help the Queen keep the realm completely under the obedience of the King and at the same time retain it under obedience to the Holy See. It was the easier to do this because there were not in France either anabaptists, or any heretics who refused to accept the first six General Councils of the Church. But the consciences of those who had left the Church and the consciences of many who had not yet left it, were troubled by three points: First, the use of images; and the Holy Father was asked to order that they should be removed from the altars and put on the outside of the churches. Second, the administration of the Holy Sacraments; and the Pope was asked to consent to the omission of the exorcism and some of the prayers in baptism. In regard to the communion, the Pope was asked to consent that it should be administered in public always after the recital of prayers in the vulgar tongue; that the procession of the holy sacrament when the host was borne in the monstrance through the streets should be omitted and that an explanation should be made of the mass, bringing out its spiritual meaning, emphasizing, for the sake of those who doubted, the words of the mass which called it the sacrifice of praise. Finally, the Pope was asked to borrow from the schismatics their custom of singing the psalms in public worship and making their prayers in the language understood by the people. If this were done twice a day, many of them would be brought back. "If the Holy Father will by his authority restore

[1] Cal. F. 1562, p. 502, 526, 545, 546; Arch. C. VI, 35; Condé, II, 20.

these ancient customs of the Church alongside those which have more recently been received, this realm will always remain as faithful to the obedience of the Holy See as it has been in the past, and the Queen, by her vigilance, prudence and goodness, will reunite in time her divided people, or at least those separated from the Church will remain so small in number that they will have no means of increasing and it will be much easier to bring back peace and union." Some even more striking concessions to the Protestants than these, were to be proposed by the Emperor of Germany, but there was little hope of getting anything of the kind endorsed by the Roman curia, or accepted by the orthodox party of France. Neither does it seem probable that any conceivable concession could then have healed the schism between Protestants and Roman Catholics.[1]

The party of orthodoxy in France set itself to resist to the utmost of its power the January Edict of concession and conciliation, which, after the first flush of gratitude, the Reformed churches came to regard as entirely inadequate. Before a royal edict could become law, it must be registered by the parlements of the kingdom; though they could not refuse to register for more than a certain time. All the parlements registered the Edict of January except those of Provence and Paris. A royal emissary forced the Parlement of Provence to give way, and, after a long struggle, the Parlement of Paris finally registered the Edict under protest.

[1] Condé, II, 562.

CHAPTER XV

THE LINES DRAWN FOR CIVIL WAR. CATHERINE BETWEEN GUISE AND CONDE

The final registering of the tolerant Edict of January did not bring tranquillity, for before that time, legal and diplomatic opposition to the policy of conciliation was beginning to give place to armed opposition, and civil war was in sight.

This civil war was not, however, between those factions of the nobility of France whose zealous strife for power had started at the beginning of the reign of Henry II. The new element of difference of opinion about religion had brought a new line of cleavage. The Bourbon-Montmorency faction was hopelessly divided. The heads of the two families and a part of their adherents were opposed by the younger members of the two great houses, who carried with them the bulk of their friends and vassals. The King of Navarre and his brother, the Cardinal of Bourbon, were in sharp opposition to their younger brother, the Prince of Condé, and the Constable had reached the point where he was even willing to take arms against the policy supported by his three nephews, Admiral Coligny, the Captain General of the French infantry d'Andelot, and the Cardinal of Châtillon.

While their ancient adversaries were thus divided, the four brothers of the family of Guise with all their adherents remained solidly united. They determined to carry farther their successful policy of dividing possible opponents of their cause. In case civil war came, the Huguenots would ask help not only from the English but also from the Lutheran Princes of Germany. But some of the Lutheran theologians were strongly opposed to the theology

of Calvin; indeed, some of them seemed more inclined to irreconcilable hostility to Calvinists than to Roman Catholics. The Cardinal of Lorraine had already shown his willingness to make restatements of orthodox doctrines and modifications of ancient practices which might render it easier for Lutherans to reunite with the Church and the Duke of Guise was anxious that the theological differences between Calvinists and Lutherans should be deepened so that, in case it came to arms in France, as many Lutheran Princes as possible might refuse to allow the levy in their states of mercenaries for the Huguenot army.[1]

Duke Christopher of Würtemberg, in his youth, served for eight years in the army of Francis I at the head of two thousand lansquenets recruited in his father's duchy. He and the young Duke of Guise had become friends during the campaigns in Italy. For some months the Duke of Guise had been carrying on an active correspondence with his old comrade in arms, in which the Duke of Würtemberg showed the evident hope of converting his friend to Lutheranism. An interview between the Duke and the four brothers of the house of Guise was arranged at Saverne, not far from their princely seat of Joinville. It was most friendly and the Cardinal of Lorraine wrote to Cardinal Borromeo about his hopes of bringing back some of the Lutherans to the Church. Duke Christopher, in an account of the interview written in his own hand, records that the Cardinal of Lorraine said, "I have read the confession of Augsburg and the three chief Lutheran theologians. I approve entirely of their doctrines. But I must conceal my opinion for a while in order to gain others whose faith is feeble." The Cardinal and the Duke of Guise denied all responsibility for the past persecutions and "They then gave me their hands, promising, on their honor as princes and their hopes of salvation, not to persecute, either openly or secretly, the adherents of the new doctrine." [2]

[1] Montaigne, I, XXVII; de Thou, III, 128.

[2] Bull. Soc. Prot. 24, pp. 71, 113, 209, 499. Arch. C. VI, 59, Puchesse (2), Bull. Soc. Prot. pntd. IV, 184.

This absence from the center of intrigue, had emphasized the fact that the Guise held the balance of power among the divided families of Bourbon and Montmorency. The Duke was scarcely back from Saverne before the King of Navarre, irritated by the efforts of his younger brother to keep up Reformed worship at Paris in spite of the desperate hostility of the mass of the population, sent for Guise to join him with a strong escort, "in order to take means to reverse and destroy all that has been done in contravention of the ('persecuting') Edict of July." Catherine heard of this summons and feared that her policy of conciliation was to be destroyed. She sent Guise word not to go to Paris, but to come without any forces, straight to her near Meaux, and her word was backed by a letter from the King. Guise started, ostensibly for court, attended by a strong and heavily armed escort. His journey was scarcely begun, when he became involved on the first of March, 1562, in an affray which started the flames of a civil war that blazed or smouldered for more than thirty years.[1]

The Huguenots spoke of this affray as the Massacre of Vassy, carefully planned by the Duke of Guise to show that the Roman Catholics of the kingdom would not permit them to enjoy the liberties promised by the Edict of January. The Duke of Guise said his remonstrances with an illegal assembly, containing many of his vassals, had resulted in a violent attack upon him, which had unfortunately compelled his gentlemen and guards to kill a number of people. The truth lies between these two accounts. It is very improbable that the Duke of Guise intended beforehand to attack the worshippers at Vassy. On the other hand, it is equally improbable that the unarmed assembly with many women and children among them, attacked the Duke and his strong escort. Many episodes of his life show that Francis of Guise was not a cruel man, but he had more than his share of that passionate pride in resenting the slightest suggestion of insult which was characteristic of

[1] Pasquier (2), IV, l. 14, ctd. Bouillé, II, 170.

all nobles of the time. A short time before, the Huguenots of Vassy had hooted and driven away the Bishop of Châlons, sent by the Duke's mother to preach to them and to bring them back to what she thought their duty. When Guise learned that, at the very moment of his passing through a city, under his brother's jurisdiction,[1] a service which he regarded as insolent was being held, he sent in an imperious mood to summon the heretics to his presence for reproof. The Huguenots of Vassy by their own account of their reception of the Bishop of Châlons, were not accustomed to take reproof very humbly. A quarrel arose between the worshippers and the Duke's gentlemen. When the Duke arrived at the scene, fighting had begun and his autocratic temper and the hatred of his guards and servitors for the Huguenot heretics, account for the forty-five killed and many more wounded. That the worshipping assembly could not really have been very menacing is shown by the fact that only one man was killed among the Duke's following. It was not a fight but a massacre.

Neither side believed that Vassy was the outcome of chance and passion. It made Guise the idol of all who wanted to exterminate heresy by the sword, but Duke Christopher of Würtemberg wrote at the end of his notes of the interview of Saverne, "May God be the avenger of guile and perjury!" All over France, as if moved by a common impulse, the Huguenot nobility began to gather in armed bands. The leaders of the Huguenot churches held a conference and sent Beza to demand justice from the King against the Duke of Guise. When he made his demand in the presence of the Queen Mother and the King of Navarre, Navarre could not repress his anger. He said no one should touch a finger of the Duke of Guise, and accused the members of the churches of going to their preachings armed, to which Beza answered, "Arms in the hands of wise men bring peace." "Sire," he added, "it is the part of the Church of God in whose name I speak, to

[1] Bouillé, II, 171.

endure blows and not to give them, but I beg you to remember that anvil has worn out many hammers." [1]

After the affray at Vassy, Guise moved slowly along the roads which led both to court and to Paris, and at his château of Nanteuil on the upper Marne he met all the members of his family, the Constable and three of his sons, the Marshal St. André and other great nobles of the anti-Huguenot party. There he received another message from Catherine urging him to come to Monceaux, where the King was, and forbidding him to go to Paris. Guise answered that he was expecting friends to visit him and could not come to Monceaux. A few days later, undoubtedly by the counsel of the chiefs of his party, he set out for Paris.

The ability, the reputation and the personality of the Duke of Guise combined to mark him out as a splendid leader for civil war. Even before Vassy he had been the idol of the populace of Paris. One of his gentlemen described Guise's entry into the city about a year before:

"To visit the King he rode his horse, which was called le Moret, a splendid black animal with a haughty gait, covered with a big horsecloth of black velvet broidered with silver. The Duke wore a doublet and trousers of crimson satin, a loose cloak with a cape of black, banded with crimson and a bonnet of black velvet with a splendid red plume. He looked among his three or four hundred gentlemen like a huge oak among the other trees of the forest. When it had been noised about the city that he had arrived, the people so pressed upon his path that it took him nearly an hour to reach the royal palace, because the crowd filled up the road. The cheers of the people applauded his coming with the most extreme joy, showing the confidence and trust which they had in him."

The news of the affair at Vassy raised this old popularity of Guise in Paris to the highest pitch. When he entered through the Porte St. Denis on the 16th of March, 1562, accompanied by the chief lords of the Catholic party and a train of two thousand horses, he was met by the un-

[1] De la Noue, 546. Hist. Ecc., II, 7.

bounded enthusiasm of a huge crowd. The city magistrates received him and the prevost of the merchants delivered an oration, hailing him as the defender of the Faith and offering him, in the name of the city of Paris, twenty thousand men and as much money as he needed to save religion.[1]

The next day three of the Lorraine brothers, the Constable and the Marshals Brissac, Thermes and St. André wrote to the Queen Mother, saying that they had intended to come to kiss her hand at Fontainebleau, but the chief merchants of Paris were terrorized by the Prince of Condé and the Huguenots. They would therefore remain to protect them. They asked that the King of Navarre should come to help them in restoring order and begged her not to believe the false reports that they intended to do anything against her authority. At the same time they wrote the Spanish Ambassador that the King of Navarre had "lifted the mask" and was acting entirely with them and asked him to urge the King of Spain "to do everything to gratify the King of Navarre in order to keep him faithful to the good cause." Catherine found herself in an extremely difficult position. The Triumvirate had finally gained the King of Navarre and felt strong enough to show its hand. The futile excuse of Guise only emphasized his open disobedience to her commands and the flattery of the marshal's message was so obvious as to be almost mockery. She saw the prospect of falling again under the dominance of the Guise. Even before the Duke came to Paris, she had been very much afraid of his faction and the English Ambassador reported "the Queen Mother does not trust any of the papists and assists the Protestants." Indeed she went much further in this direction than the English Ambassador then knew, for she sent to the Huguenot chief, the Prince of Condé, messengers carrying three notes. The first told him "that she was not more certain of herself than she was of him and that he could look upon her as if she was his own mother." She begged him, in a note ending, "burn this

[1] Brant. IV, 233; Bouillé, II, 179.

instantly," to "save the children, the mother and the realm," and she added to the third note that "if it was not for the trust she had in God and the assurance that he would aid her to preserve the realm, she should be more cast down even than she was," . . . but "I hope that we shall soon remedy all these troubles with your good counsel and aid." She had also sent word to Admiral Coligny to seize Orleans, Rouen and other cities.[1]

Frightened as she was, Catherine tried to carry things off with an appearance of courage. She asked her waiting-women one day what they were saying in Paris. They replied that the whole city was against her and that everybody called the Chancellor a heretic. "She laughed loudly and answered that the Chancellor was the best man in the world. Still laughing, she asked what was said of the Duke of Guise and his followers and if he was coming to take the government away from her?" So that her conduct made the Spanish Ambassador, even without knowing anything of the secret messages to Condé, believe that he was staying in Paris by her orders to balance the power of the Guise.[2] For even at this early stage in her career as a politician, Catherine began to follow what afterwards became the dominant idea of her usual policy, the attempt to neutralize factions by balancing one against the other and so trying to establish her own and her son's absolute control of the state. The policy of reconciliation which she cleverly forced on the Guise after the conspiracy of Amboise, ought not to be regarded as part of this later policy of "balance." It was rather a shrewd judgment to which she hoped to rally the chief elements of the state. But now that this attempt at reconciliation had broken down completely, Catherine, still a timid novice at the game of high politics, began to see dimly the possibility of a "policy of balance." Apparently she thought that the only practicable method of

[1] B. N. fds. fr. 6611, f. 20; A. N. K. 1496, f. 52, 1500, June 21. Cal. F. Mar. 9, 20. Letts. I, 282, 283. B. N. It. 1723 f. 176, 1725 f. 109, Jan. 25, Mar. 8, 1563.

[2] A. N. K. 1497, Mar. 25.

blocking the Guise from regaining that control of the government from which she had suffered during the reign of her oldest son, was to balance their faction by another faction.

Hypothetical history is not very profitable, but it may be doubted whether this policy was the only possible one; certainly it may be doubted whether circumstances forced it upon her as anything more than a temporary expedient. Outside of the followers of the younger Bourbons, the Châtillons and the Reformed churches, there were plenty of people in France who distrusted the lead of the Guise. Such a one, for example, was Morvillier, Bishop of Orleans, and ex-royal Ambassador to Venice, who wrote in a private letter the end of November, 1560, his dislike of these Italians and Spaniards who were turning France aside from her true national policy. There was a knot of these men, for the most part old servants of the state, whose opinions can be seen in the letters addressed to Bernard Bochetel, who had been a secretary of Francis I and Henry II. Although unorganized and unled, they had a certain unconscious agreement on what might be called a national policy. They were not heretics, though some of them were accused of being heretics, but they were very much opposed to the extreme papal claims of control over the Church of France. They were strongly anti-Spanish and did not want to see France weakened in the face of Spain by civil war. This nationalist, or Crown, group included such men as Claude de l'Aubespine, de Noailles, Bishop of Acqs, the Bishop of Angoulême, the Sieur de Lisle, Herault de Boistaillé, Lansac, du Ferrier, Bourdin, etc. In these experienced servants of the state and such of the high and the lesser nobility and the burghers as could have been rallied round them, lay the possibility of making the stable assertion of Catherine's influence over the destinies of France constructive. To do what Elizabeth did and unite against the forces that made for disunion and civil war, a solid middle-of-the-road party who would follow the cry "France first!" was, it may

at least be suspected, an open way of safety for Catherine and for France. But to take it she must have had in her heart some touch of that love of country which underlay all the tyranny, caprice and vanity of Elizabeth. And why should Catherine, an Italian, born of an Italian generation in which the passion of national patriotism was not active, love France as Elizabeth loved England? If such a way was open, Catherine would hardly have seen it. Her training and her character naturally led her to feel more and more strongly that no other policy was possible for her except that policy of "balance" which, according to the testimony of all observers hostile or friendly, she never up to the end of her life, definitely abandoned.[1]

The more or less prevalent idea that she adopted this policy for abstract reasons as a result of her careful study of the teachings of Machiavelli on statecraft, is mistaken. In the first place, if she had followed his teaching she never would have adopted the policy of balance, for he distinctly disapproves of it as dangerous. And in the second place, although the Prince was dedicated to her father, there is no sign in all her letters that Catherine ever read it. If she did, certainly she profited very little by it, for she repeatedly violated its fundamental maxims. She began to adopt timidly the policy of "balance" because it seemed to her the only possible policy.[2]

For success in the coming civil war, it was evident that there were two chief points to be gained at the start: first, the control of the person of the King, and second, the possession of Paris. The Huguenot party, assembling under the lead of Condé, felt at this time that they had the support of the King, but before Condé's correspondence with Catherine was over, it was quite evident that they could not hold the city of Paris. The entire population outside the higher burghers, was strongly against them. One of his captains wrote, "Condé could no more fight Guise in Paris

[1] B. N. C. C. C. 394 f. 21, B. N. It. 1726 f. 81.
[2] Van Dyke, review (2), Leipziger V. J. Schrift.

than a fly could attack an elephant." The bulk of the nobles of the Huguenot party had estates in Normandy or south of the river Loire. The Triumvirate were, therefore, able to rally quickly a much larger number of the nobility of their faction than their opponents could get together. Before the end of the month this fact was evident to such different observers as the English Ambassador and the Nuncio, and Catherine began to regret that she had put herself so completely into the hands of the Huguenots. She sent, therefore, a fourth message asking Condé to withdraw from Paris and when he complied on the 23rd of March, she wrote telling him that she would never forget "that which you do for me and if I die before I have the means of showing my gratitude as fully as I wish, I will leave word to my children to show it." This feeling that perhaps she had made a mistake in relying upon the Protestant party which seemed for the present to be the weaker, was strengthened by the fact that the Triumvirate sent Cardinal Guise to "promise and assure the Queen that they were not considering anything in regard to the government nor in prejudice of her authority, but that they were only anxious about the preservation of religion." [1]

The Catholic nobles, now secure in the possession of Paris, determined to make sure also of the second great card in the game, the King. They left Paris with a force which they knew Condé could not face and marched to Fontainebleau, where the Queen was. Catherine knew of their approach and was strongly urged by the Chancellor de l'Hospital and her intimate, the Seigneur de Soubise, to withdraw to the city of Orleans, some fifty miles to the southwest and close to the Huguenot country, where they would be able to gather forces to defend her from the other faction. She apparently hesitated, talking over the matter for several hours at a time in her private cabinet, until they thought they were about to gain her consent. On the very

[1] De la Noue, 551, Arch. C. VI, 54, Cal. F. App. 1. Letts. I, 283. A. N. K. 1497, Mar. 25.

day when news came that the Triumvirate were advancing from Paris, Soubise lingered at Fontainebleau as long as he dared, in the vain hope of finally persuading her. The Triumvirate when they arrived, were able to pay less attention to her hesitation. Catherine would have liked to remain where she was, occupying a position independent of either faction, but they insisted that the King must go for his own safety to Paris, and they took him in spite of his tears. Condé had lost both the capital and the King, and when at last the scattered forces of the Huguenots were mustered under his command it was too late to act.[1]

The most important contingent that rode into Condé's camp at Mans was headed by Admiral Coligny. The man who was to be for ten years, not only the real leader but almost the common father of the Huguenots, had long hesitated before he would consent to civil war. History shows no better example of the old saying that those who are the last to draw the sword are often the last to sheathe it. When he was finally induced by the tears and the reproaches of his wife to join in the defense of his persecuted brethren, the Admiral's iron will, military experience, and piety, made him from the very first the soul of the party. Realizing that the Huguenots had lost the chance for the offensive, he made up his mind to occupy the nearest strong city and stand on the defensive, until the Reformed churches and the Huguenot nobility could gather an army. The strategic line for them to hold was the line of the River Loire, with the city of Orleans for their stronghold. His younger brother, d'Andelot, was sent forward to seize the gates on the second of April, 1562. Condé and the Admiral were still thirty miles off and the Triumvirate was rushing troops towards Orleans. Hard-riding messengers, sent one after another, urged the Huguenots to hurry. A desperate call met them about twenty miles from the city and the Prince, with some two thousand horse behind him, masters

[1] Soubise, Memoires Jeanne d'Albret is untrustworthy. Van Dyke Review (4); Rev. Hist. Castelnau, 85; Condé, II, 197, 228.

and valets together, "started at full gallop. Great numbers of people were on the roads going to Paris and seeing this mysterious race, they thought all the fools in France were riding on a wager, for there was as yet no news of civil war and they roared with merriment at seeing valets rolling on the ground, horses broken down, valises split open, while the riders themselves broke into repeated peals of laughter." Meantime the general of artillery who had been sent by the Triumvirate to occupy Orleans, was jogging along another road on a mule at the rate of eighteen miles a day, either, as the Spanish Ambassador suggests, because he was a stupid old man, or because he was in his heart a Huguenot. The greatest of the civil wars of France opened with this grotesque scene.[1]

In the shelter of the walls of Orleans, the Huguenot leaders began to make every effort to collect forces. They sent envoys and letters to England, Switzerland, Savoy and Germany, explaining what they were doing and asking for sympathy, but, at the beginning, Coligny was entirely opposed to asking actual help from abroad. They wrote to the two thousand odd Reformed churches asking for men and money and they summoned the Huguenot nobility from all parts of France to join them. They used the power of the press to its fullest extent and poured out a flood of pamphlets and declarations defending the justice of their cause. Perhaps the most significant of these is the Articles of Association, signed by two hundred French nobles and afterwards reported to have been "assented to and signed by over four thousand gentlemen of the best and most ancient houses in France." It denounced the audacity, temerity and ambition of some of the subjects of the King, who despise his youth and have dared to take arms against his edicts and put to death a good number of his poor subjects when they were assembled for divine worship with his permission. Against all laws, human and divine, these people have seized the person of the King and of the Queen,

[1] De la Noue, 554. A. N. K. 1497, App. 8.

and the signers, wishing to save the King and the Crown and to restore the Queen to her authority, and also to save for the poor faithful Christians of this realm the liberty of conscience which it has pleased the King to grant them by edict, have joined themselves together under the leadership of the Prince of Condé (one of the protectors of the Crown) for this purpose. "We promise not to suffer in our company anything contrary to the commandments of God, such as idolatry and superstition, blasphemy or licentiousness, violence, plundering, breaking of images and sacking of temples, or any other such thing forbidden by God or by the last edict of January." They were willing to receive into their Association anybody who sympathized with its purpose, and they promised to treat as a traitor anyone who betrayed it or withdrew from it. At the same time there were published forged articles of a supposed agreement made between the members of the Triumvirate for a detailed plan under the leadership of the King of Spain to destroy the Protestants of the world; beginning with the destruction of the city of Geneva, all of whose inhabitants, without distinction either of age or sex, were to be destroyed by the sword or thrown into the lake. All French Protestants were also to be put to death and then the rest of Protestant Switzerland and Germany were to be reduced to obedience to the Church.[1]

On the other hand the Triumvirate, protesting equally their loyalty to the King and their willingness to submit to the authority of the Queen Mother, asserted that their only objects were the restoration of the ancient Church as the sole religion in France and to prevent anyone not a faithful member of it from holding any office in the state, to disperse all armed forces except those under the command of the King of Navarre and to restore tranquillity completely.[2]

The Crown answered the Huguenot documents by

[1] Whitehead, 111, ctd. 114; Condé, III, 270. See Note.
[2] Condé. III, 338.

reaffirming the Edict of January and denying that there was any intention of abandoning it. A number of circumstances suggested to the associated Huguenot chiefs doubt as to the sincerity of these assurances. On the 12th of April a Huguenot congregation worshipping according to the Edict just outside the walls of the city of Sens, of which the Cardinal of Guise was Archbishop, was attacked by a mob of townsfolk and peasants from the neighborhood. A massacre began which lasted, according to the journal of a Catholic priest of the neighborhood, until all the heretics of Sens, with the exception of some who were hid by their Roman Catholic friends, were killed. Those who survived were so few in number that they never dared to seek redress by justice "from fear that the people might throw themselves upon them and send them to swim in the river Yonne after the others." The Reformed church of Sens had, according to the custom which angered Monluc in the south, employed a captain and a guard to protect them and, if need be, to organize their resistance. He was out of town when the riot began, but hurried back only to be killed with all his men. The children of the city tied a rope about his feet and dragged the body through the streets for hours, crying, "Bring out your swine, here is the swineherd." For years to come this insulting the dead was almost the normal action of the superstitious and debased mobs whenever they attacked Huguenots in cities. An Italian wrote home of the Paris mob, "If they find one of the new religion anywhere, they kill him at once and drag him around as if he were a dead dog." It was the bitter preaching which helped to rouse the fanaticism of these mobs, which made the Huguenot soldiers apt to kill almost every monk, innocent or guilty, on whom they could lay their hands.[1]

Both sides were levying forces as rapidly as they could and both sides were privately assuring the Queen Mother that they would lay down their arms provided the other

[1] Condé, III, 300; Haton, I, 195; Arch. Mod. qtd. Whitehead, 130.

side would do it first. The moderate Catholic, Etienne Pasquier, has recorded his opinion in a contemporary letter: "The Prince of Condé is unwilling to accept these offers of the Duke of Guise. He is of the opinion that they are trying to fool him. The others have the same judgment about him and perhaps in this matter neither of the two are deceived." Condé announces that his purpose is to set the King at liberty and in the military commission summoning the nobility to support the Crown, it is announced that the purpose is to set free the Prince of Condé, who is held a captive by some seditious people. "It is fair to say that this is trick for trick and paying the others in their own money." [1]

Catherine was now anxious to wash her hands of all connection with the Huguenot rising. She denied that Condé had ever had any suggestions from her to arm for her defense and the service of the King. On the contrary, she said that all she had ever urged him to do for the King's service was to withdraw from Paris and to disarm. When he published in Germany her letters she appended to them explanations in this sense, which are exceedingly lame, particularly those of the one which ends: "Burn this letter instantly." And a conversation reported by the Spanish Ambassador before the publication of the letters makes the case against her rather complete. When she heard it said that "Condé had letters signed by her asking him to arm, she did not deny the existence of the letters. She said, 'It might be they had forged the signatures,' which makes some here say she wanted to deny in advance signatures she knew they could produce." These denials of all connection or sympathy with the heretic party, were made particularly strong towards Spain. Catherine wrote to her Ambassador at Madrid: "I have been anxious that all the Lords should write to the King of Spain in regard to my attitude toward religion, not that I need any testimony before God nor men in regard to my faith nor my good works, but because of the

[1] Pasquier (2), II, 100.

lies which have been told of me. For I have never changed in deed, will, nor habits, the religion which I have held for forty-three years, and in which I have been baptized and brought up." [1]

With all Catherine's desire not to be involved openly with the Huguenot rising, now that their party seemed the weaker, she was evidently very much afraid of the other faction, headed by her old enemies, the Guise. Not long after her return to Paris, she called the Duchess of Guise and began by saying she had always been exceedingly fond of her and therefore wished to confess something to her. She had, at the beginning, been so suspicious that Guise and his party wanted to remove her from all authority and even from the person of the King, that she had played a double part and had in a certain way sustained the other side, but if she could "assure her that they did not desire to do anything in her prejudice, she would believe it and follow their advice." The Duchess and afterwards her husband, assured the Queen in the name of all the confederates that if she would "really support religion, the authority of the King and the safety of the kingdom, she would find in them all obedience, for they never had any idea of attacking her authority." [2]

Both sides were now not only mustering forces in France but doing their best to raise auxiliary and mercenary contingents in Germany, Switzerland, from the Pope, England and Spain. After the massacre of Sens a rapid succession of risings and surprises had put into the Huguenot hands a great number of the French walled cities, so that Brantôme wrote, "when it was asked what cities have the Huguenots taken? the answer was, 'Better ask what ones they have not taken.' " [3]

Catherine, however, was still determined to make peace and she had around her some of the little set of men already

[1] B. N. fds. fr. 6611 f. 59; Letts. I, 290, 296, 596. A. N. K. 1497.
[2] A. N. K. 1497 Sp. Amb.
[3] Brant. IV, 293, Comp. B. N. fds. fr. 6620 f. 198.

alluded to, for the most part moderate Catholics, who shared her dismay at the prospect of civil war. Two of her secretaries wrote to their friends at this time: "If God doesn't help, I am very much afraid that there will be the most terrible bloodshed the world has ever seen. . . . You are very fortunate that you are far enough away not to see close by the evil which we are now seeing," and the French Ambassador in England wrote, "I thank God that the King has the stronger forces, but I would with all my heart he were not compelled to try his strength against his subjects; that is to say, against himself. . . . This compels me to say that no conditions of peace can be suggested which are not preferable to civil war." These men probably had throughout the kingdom thousands of sympathizers who disliked heresy but thought civil war was worse. Unfortunately for France they were not yet organized as they afterwards were under Coligny's cousin, the son of the Constable, into the party of the so-called Politiques.[1]

In spite of the suspicions and insults called out to her in the streets of Paris, Catherine, with a sort of yielding obstinacy, continued her negotiations for peace, even after the armies were mustered and the fighting had actually begun in many parts of France. She finally met Condé on the 9th of June in a pouring rain in a flat, open country not far from Toury. Condé refused to enter a near-by barn or to dismount from his horse, and Catherine talked to him without even removing the half mask of black velvet which ladies of the time often wore. Under these depressing circumstances, Catherine's usual merry humor did not desert her. The Huguenot gentlemen had adopted the custom of wearing white cloaks over their armor. Catherine said: "My cousin, your followers are a lot of millers." To which the dapper little prince, a typical French noble, a hard fighter but always full of gaiety and gallantry to the ladies, answered, "That's so they may be ready to beat your donkeys, Madame." Meantime the gentlemen of their

[1] B. N. fds. fr. 6618 f. 170, 172. Teulet, II, 179; Pasquier (2), Bk. X, 6.

escorts, a hundred on a side, had been halted at eight hundred paces from each other. A Huguenot leader describes the scene: "I had a dozen friends on the other side, each of whom was as dear to me as a brother, and there were many others in the same situation, so that, man after man asking permission from his officer, the two lines of crimson cloaks and white cloaks were soon mingled together in friendly talk and when they separated it was with tears in their eyes." [1]

Condé said that if the Triumvirate and their friends would disarm and return to their homes, he and his friends would do the same, and asked for the confirmation of the Edict of January granting toleration to the Huguenots. Catherine was unable to promise either point, the conference dissolved and the royal army at once advanced to within eighteen miles of Orleans.

Catherine was not discouraged. She continued to send messengers to the Huguenot chiefs and on the twenty-fourth of June, sixteen of them signed a written promise that, if the Triumvirate would retire to their homes, they would ask the Prince of Condé to put himself in Catherine's hands as a pledge of their obedience to the King. The rejoicing Triumvirate at once withdrew from the army, but went back only a few miles to the city of Châteaudun. Four days later Condé was taken by Catherine to the château of Talcy, some miles in the rear. He asked that Coligny and the other chiefs might have an interview on the following day. In spite of the King of Navarre's objection to this, Catherine agreed and, as Coligny positively refused to enter the walls of any town, the interview was held in a barn in the country. One of the chiefs who went into the barn with the Admiral has recorded in his memoirs how Catherine came in walking with a stick (she had been injured by being thrown from her horse a short time before) and, when the interview did not go as she wished, she beat

[1] A. N. K. 1497, B. N. It. 1722 f. 353, 384, 391; d'Aubigné, II, 35, 40; Haton, I, 306; Whitehead, 119; de la Noue, 558.

on the ground with her cane, crying out, "Ah, my cousin, you are ruining me! You are driving me mad!" But the end of the interview was to her satisfaction. For some reason which no contemporary and no later historian has ever been able to discover, Condé, finding that he could get nothing but liberty of conscience without liberty of worship, finally offered for himself and his friends to sell their property and leave the kingdom. He and the Queen Mother could not resist a joke at parting, for he said with a smile, "I understand you had a little plot to keep me at Talcy as a prisoner." She burst into a laugh and intimated that they might, if they chose, have carried her off to Orleans.[1]

No sooner were the Huguenot chiefs out of the presence of the Queen, than they began to regret the rash promise which had been made and the next morning, at a council of all the chiefs and officers, the news of what had been agreed upon raised a storm of protest. One man said, "I am fifty years old and I don't quite see myself walking about a strange country gnawing a toothpick, while my neighbor is the master of my house and draws my rents. Let anyone go who will; I am going to stay in my country and die for the defense of its altars and its hearths." The Prince therefore decided to break his promise and the Queen's secretary, who had arrived to close the affair, went back to tell his mistress that it would take something more than paper to drive the Huguenots out of France. The better to excuse this action, the Huguenots published a letter from the Duke of Guise to his brother, the Cardinal of Lorraine, which made it plain that the Triumvirate had planned treachery five days before. That document was a forgery, like the supposed plan of the Triumvirate for the massacre of all the Reformed of France and of Geneva. But that the Triumvirate party did intend treachery is plainly shown to us by the correspondence of the Cardinal of Ferrara, who wrote explaining the plot with an injunction

[1] Condé, III, 518; Cal. F. 1562, p. 128. Soubise, 50; Hyp. ctd. Ranke, V, 25.

to keep it quiet. Whatever may be said in apology for the withdrawal of a promise so rash, the unsuccessful attempt which followed this council of the chief Huguenots, to surprise the royal army by a night attack in the absence of its leaders, who had withdrawn under agreement, was a plain piece of treachery.[1]

This outcome of the negotiations must have been a huge disappointment to Catherine, for on the night after the interview she wrote to the Duke of Montpensier that Condé and his followers had promised to leave the kingdom with the sole condition of liberty of conscience for the Huguenots who chose to remain and she directed him to take steps to receive the surrender of two of the chief cities they held. But even after this disappointment, she was still anxious to renew her attempts to make peace. We know from her letters to her daughter that she thought both sides hypocrites. "Everything that is done on one side and the other is nothing but the desire to rule and to take from me under cover and color of religion, the power I possess." She believed there was not, on either side, "sanctity or religion, but only private passions, vengeance, and personal hatred." She did not want either side to win. She thought she had good reason to distrust the use the Triumvirate might make of unhampered control in the state, and a letter to her Ambassador at Madrid shows that one feeling in the back of her mind made her fear above all things a Huguenot victory: that was a deep-rooted suspicion of her son-in-law, the King of Spain, to whom she was always writing such affectionate letters. If the victory should turn to the side of the Prince of Condé, "my son the Catholic King might undertake to revenge that defeat and, under pretense of aiding me to save this kingdom, would make himself the tutor of my son; which would be the very greatest of all misfortunes and the total ruin of this state." Therefore she begs the Ambassador, without letting it be known that

[1] Hist. Ecc. I; de la Noue, 562, 564; Condé, III, 509, see note. Hyp. pp. 254, 256; Duc d'Aumale, 116 (a descendant of Condé).

he had heard from her, to tell him that she has summoned six thousand Swiss and eight thousand Germans, which, in case of any disaster, would be able to save the kingdom, "so that, knowing this fact, you can take away from the King any desire to come to my aid with huge forces. Use all your five senses, because I am as much afraid as I am of death to see come to my son and to myself that utterly unbearable thing, knowing what are the counsels, practices and plots of those who have stirred up these troubles." (The Guise.)[1]

[1] Letts. I, 310, 341; X, 60, 75, 78, 330.

CHAPTER XVI

THE FIRST CIVIL WAR ABOUT RELIGION

The war soon became a cruel one. At first the Huguenots attempted to hold the strictest discipline over their forces. De la Noue, who fought in the army of the Loire under the Admiral, and later became a chief pillar of the Huguenot cause, tells the story of what happened. "Dice, cards and women were banished from the quarters, plundering was strictly forbidden and arrangements were made for religious service every day. At first the orders were admirably obeyed, but two months later the troops from Provence, at the storming of Beaugency, showed more cruelty and pillaging upon the inhabitants of the Reformed religion who couldn't escape, than they showed against the Catholic soldiers." There was even some violation of women. Two other regiments, one of Gascons and the other of Frenchmen, followed their example and the three had an evil rivalry to see who could do the worst. "That was the birth of Mademoiselle la Picorée, since so much increased in dignity that she is now called Madame, and, if the civil war continues, I do not doubt that she will even become Princess." This evil infection spread until the whole army was affected. The Admiral did his best to stop this and "he was a very good doctor to heal that illness because he was absolutely without pity for offenders. When he went into Normandy he was told that a certain captain had sacked a village. He sent at once but couldn't catch anybody except the chief and four or five soldiers, whom he strung up on the spot, booted and spurred and their cloaks on their backs, with the flag for ensign. To make the trophy more striking, he put at their feet what they had stolen, women's dresses, sheets and table-cloths mixed with chickens and

hams, with an inscription in large letters: WARNING TO ALL SOLDIERS WHO PASS BY. I must also say in favor of the Catholic regiments that they were at first kept in very good order and did little harm to the people, but I understand that they pretty soon spread their sails to the wind and took the same course that the others did. Although sometimes such disorders gave cause for laughter, yet there was more often reason for weeping to see so large a number of people carrying arms who deserve, because of their bad actions, the name of bandit rather than that of soldier." [1]

The Admiral's efforts were impeded not only by the bad military custom of allowing soldiers pillage as part of their wages, but also because of his lack of money to pay his German auxiliaries. It is a commentary on the effect of war—even war which he had tried at the beginning to make worthy of being called a war for the word of God—that in four months the Admiral should write to his brother and suggest, as a means of recruiting mercenaries in Germany, to promise them "the sack of Paris," because "we do not treat the Papists so badly as their beastly cruelty deserves." [2]

There was one form of disorder in particular which the Huguenot captains were powerless to check—iconoclasm. The impulse to this seemed to be with many of the Huguenot soldiers almost an obsession. Soon after the Huguenots seized Orleans, the Prince and the Admiral, hearing that the ornaments of the great church of Sainte Croix were being destroyed, ran to the place followed by a number of their suite and began with blows of the swords and of sticks to try to stop the disorder. Finally the Prince seized a harquebus and took aim at a man who had climbed high up to smash a statue. He calmly turned around and said, "Wait a moment, sir, until I have broken down this idol and then I will die if it pleases you." [3]

[1] De la Noue, 573.
[2] Lettenhove (1), 9.
[3] Hist. Ecc., II, 51.

The war was not a war of pitched battles, but rather of sieges of châteaux and small towns. Over great stretches of French soil it was not possible to ride abroad without fearing that "every patch of wood concealed an ambuscade." In the far south the fighting took on a savage and terribly desperate character. The royal general, Monluc, and the Huguenot captain, des Adrets, Governor of Lyons and Commander in the South by election of the inhabitants and by commission of Condé, rivalled each other in cruel deeds. Monluc accepted the surrender of four hundred men of the garrison of Terraube under promise of sparing their lives. Two days later, irritated because the garrison of a neighboring town he was besieging had treacherously fired upon a flag of truce, he sent back for the four leading nobles among his prisoners and hung them on a walnut tree in sight of the city. The soldiers were all put to the sword and flung into a deep well until he filled it up so that the top of the heap could be touched with the hand. "A very good riddance of very bad people," he wrote in his Memoirs. Des Adrets, capturing several little cities in the hilly country to the west of the southern course of the Rhone, varied his slaughter of surrendered garrisons by making some of the soldiers jump from the precipices on which the citadels were built. One poor fellow, hesitating to jump off, Des Adrets remarked with a sneer, "What, will it take you two jumps to do it?" "Well," answered the victim, "I'll give you ten to do it in." The savage captain took the wit as a ransom for the man's life.[1]

It is worthy of note that these two men who made the most terrible names for themselves on either side, were not moved by any religious fanaticism. When the troubles began, Monluc, whose brother, the Bishop of Valence, was not very orthodox, hesitated as to which side he should join, and later he was suspected by the Cardinal of Lorraine of wishing to go over to the Huguenots. Des Adrets in the second war became a leader on the orthodox side. Curiously

[1] D'Aubigné (1), II, 50, 56; Monluc, V, 258, 535.

enough we have a record of what each of them said about his own method of warfare. Monluc told the Duke of Alva, two years after the war was finished, and when there was fear of its renewal, "if everybody had only followed his example, that is to say, to grant quarter to no one, all would be now over, but, unfortunately, many brave people meeting in war said one to another, 'my cousin,' or 'my brother' and so the war would last forever; whereas there wouldn't be more than enough for a single breakfast with the scoundrels if everybody would act together." Long after the war, the young Huguenot captain, d'Aubigné, met des Adrets. "The old man was of a strong and vigorous age. He had a savage eye and an eagle-like profile. His face was thin and bony and marked with spots the color of blood, as Sulla is described to us; in short he had the air of a real fighting man." D'Aubigné asked him "Why he had inflicted cruelties unworthy of his great work as a soldier?" He answered, "first, because it had seemed to him great cowardice to suffer the cruel killing of his faithful comrades without reprisals, and second, to make his men fight harder because, having given no quarter, they knew they couldn't ask any." [1]

Both of the men acted on policy and, in estimating the cruelty of the Huguenot wars, it is well not to forget that veteran fighting men (and general European war had stopped only in 1559) had seen terrible slaughter and pillage. Otherwise one is in danger of considering peculiar to the Huguenot wars, things which had been to a large extent common to the warfare of the preceding generations. The history of the Franco-Spanish wars in Italy of the first half of the century shows a terrible list of massacres and plunderings. Nothing done in the civil wars of France was as bad in the way of cruelty, lust and sacrilege as what had been done a generation before at the sack of Rome by the German and Spanish regiments: and there had been little

[1] Courteault (2), 391; Granvelle (1), IX, 288; De Thou (2), 228; d'Aubigné, II, 73.

to choose between those who called themselves Lutherans and those who called themselves Catholics.

The moderate Roman Catholic, Etienne Pasquier, a contemporary, sums up the situation very justly.

"It would be impossible to tell you what barbarous cruelties are committed on both sides. Where the Huguenot is master, he ruins all the images, demolishes the sepulchres and tombs, takes away all the consecrated objects in the churches. In exchange for this the Catholic kills, murders, drowns all those whom he knows belong to that faith and fills the rivers with their corpses. Added to this there is a good deal of private revenge under cover of the public quarrel. Although the leaders put on the appearance of condemning such conduct, nevertheless there is a good deal of falsehood and connivance hidden under that attitude."

The Huguenot captain, de la Noue, in his military essays already cited, echoes the Catholic writer. "The war cries were 'For God—For the Gospel' and yet these children of the same God pursued each other with fire and blood like savage beasts." No wonder atheists increased, for "it is our wars for religion which have made us forget religion." In one respect both sides were equally pitiless. The slaughter of priests and monks was very common after the Huguenots had captured a city, and Catherine wrote to Marshal Tavannes in Burgundy: "Do all you can to finish cleaning the entire country of Burgundy of the vermin of preachers and of ministers who have started this pest there." [1]

Two things particularly enraged the Huguenots, first the brutal murders and massacres, after the model of Sens, by the debased mobs which then infested all the large French cities. These mobs were intensely superstitious and eager for blood and plunder. In Paris these mob murders were continuous. "It was enough for a street urchin to call out after a stranger, 'There goes a Huguenot' and a crowd gathered, killed him, stripped him and the boys dragged the body through the streets to throw it into the river. If they

[1] Pasquier (2), IV, 7. My approval of this contemporary judgment is based on a collation of outrages by both sides. Letts. I, 327.

kill a citizen, they plunder his house and generally kill his wife and children." One mob would not wait for the execution of a heretic. They took him from the officers, literally tore him in pieces and threw the fragments into the river. Another day a murderer standing on the ladder was crafty enough to call out, "Alas! I must die for killing a Huguenot who insulted Our Lady." The mob rescued him and set him free. Second, the violation of Huguenot women by the soldiers of the Crown. This crime, very common in all wars of the time, was undoubtedly increased by the slanders (similar to those circulated about the Christians in the days of the Roman Empire) concerning the debaucheries that went on in the secret assemblies of the Reformed churches. A deliberate attempt had been made to circulate these slanders which were widely believed. Under Francis II an attempt had even been made to establish them by perjury in open court. Somewhat later the old fable of "the smearers" or people in a conspiracy to spread the infection of the plague, for which imaginary crime fifteen women had been burnt at Geneva in 1545, was revived and applied to the Huguenots. During the peace which followed the war we are now describing, it was reported by several correspondents that the Huguenots were poisoning the soup at the inns to spread the plague and had smeared more than seven hundred Roman Catholic homes at Lyons with pest salve in order to make the epidemic so bad that the King could not visit the city.[1]

The hatred of the Roman Catholic side was exasperated not only by these horrible slanders, but also by a strange form of that deliberate fury of destruction against inanimate objects which has been described under the title of iconoclasm. In some places the Huguenot soldiers destroyed tombs and scattered the bones of the dead: an impulse which showed itself also in Scotland. The strong protests of men like Beza against this barbarity

[1] E. g. Condé, I, 86, 90, 91; II, 89, 130, 149, 160, 193; Cal. F. 1563, 3, pp. 101, 158. Hist. Ecc. 144, 272; Marcks ctd. Sp. Amb. 89, Bonnet. Calvin's Letts. I, 428.

which extended to the tombs of the ancestors of that zealous Huguenot, the Queen of Navarre, and the attempts of Condé to stop it by punishment scarcely lessened the wrath and horror it caused in the minds even of moderate Catholics. These desecrators of tombs felt they were imitating King Josias, of whom we are told in the Book of Kings that he "burnt the bones of idolaters on the altars of their idols in order to purge Judah and Jerusalem of all abominations." [1]

When the fighting began between the main armies north of the Loire, the Huguenots had decidedly the worst of it. The important city of Tours was besieged and surrendered on the first of September. Rouen, sometimes called the second richest city in the kingdom, was taken by assault in the end of October and about the same time word reached the Prince of Condé that an army of five thousand Gascons, marching up from the south to join him, had been surprised and driven back with the loss of more than one-third of its number. During the siege of Rouen the King of Navarre received a mortal wound of which he died in a few days. A weak man, always ready to postpone work for pleasure, he counted the opportunity of saving France from mortal danger to which he had been born, as of little value compared to the title of King which he had gained by marriage. He tried to use the position of champion, first of reform and then of orthodoxy, as a stake in the game he was playing to win a day-dream kingdom in Sardinia or Tunis, and he lacked wit to perceive that his crafty antagonists had loaded the dice. In life he cut rather a pitiable figure among the astuter, more resolute or more sincere men around him. As death drew near, his two physicians, one a Protestant and the other a Catholic, unable to save his body, fought a duel for the salvation of his soul and there are good grounds for the grisly joke repeated over his coffin that he finally died without being able to make up his mind whether he was a Protestant or a Catholic.

[1] Romier ctd. II, 358; Neg. Tosc. III, 489; Condé, II, 359.

In spite of the loss of Rouen the Huguenots were not discouraged. No disaster could break the iron will of Coligny and the gay spirit of Condé made a jest of defeat. "They have given us," he said, "some bad checks. They have taken our two castles (Tours and Rouen), but if they will fight us in the open field perhaps we will be able to take their knights." He expected heavy reënforcements of mercenaries brought by d'Andelot from Germany and he had made a treaty of alliance with Elizabeth of England which gave him six thousand men and one hundred and forty thousand crowns. In exchange, Havre de Grace (held by the Huguenots) was to be put in her hands until Calais was restored to her in accordance with the treaty of 1559. He also had at court a secret ally who could scarcely conceal her unwillingness to see the Huguenot party destroyed and the complete triumph of the party of Guise. The little King, with the frank impulse of a boy, blurted out his mother's feelings. When the Rhinegrave, leader of the royal German auxiliaries, was presented to him as one who had brought a notable aid to the Crown, he said aloud to his mother, "I don't know why they are bringing so many strangers into the kingdom. I don't need them. I know perfectly well that it is against the Prince of Condé, but if he was defeated and those of his company I believe that they would make of you a little chamber-maid and of me a little valet." [1]

Even before the death of Navarre the Tuscan Ambassador reported: "The Queen Mother becomes every day more suspicious. The authority of the Triumvirate makes her afraid and she trembles lest she should be removed from the government." Soon after Navarre's death she sent word to the Prince of Condé that she would use all her power to help him succeed to his brother's rank and authority and that "she was very desirous that the King, her son, and she might either come to the Prince or the Prince come to them, but she saw great difficulties in bringing that to

[1] De la Noue, 584. Lettenhove (1).

pass." This message reached the Prince while his army was in march toward Paris, taking and pillaging towns on the way. On the 26th of November they pitched their camp within a mile of the outskirts of the capital. A few days later the Queen begged the Prince and the Admiral to meet her in a windmill on the edge of the suburbs. They met three times and Catherine on her return told the English Ambassador at St. Denis that peace was made. "The Prince should have all his demands in regard to religion and that now the Queen of England should take away her men from Newhaven and other places she held. The Prince has promised it and he says the Queen has agreed with him to do so." [1]

As a matter of fact everything had been granted that the Prince asked, until it came to the matter of pledges that the agreement would be carried out. The Prince demanded that the forces on both sides should be dissolved and all the cities disarmed. Catherine answered "that all forces which have not been assembled by the King's command must retire, strangers outside the realm and Frenchmen to their houses, and that the King will retain such forces as seem to him good." To which the Huguenots, when they published their account of this transaction added this note: "And after that what would be left except to lay our heads upon the block?" They added they had good reason to know that the last day at the mill the Duke of Guise, believing the Queen would consent to the Huguenots' demands, told her that if he thought she would keep what was accorded he would never consent to it, but considered that what she did was simply for the purpose of dissolving the Prince's forces. Thus the hope of peace vanished before the suspicions of the Huguenots that Guise and his followers would not suffer the Queen Mother to keep any promises she might make for the restoration of the toleration promised in the Edict of January.[2]

[1] Neg. Tosc. III, 409, 497; B. N. It. 1723, f. 166; Forbes, II, 217, 409; Cal. F. 1562, p. 522.

[2] Hist. Ecc., II, 258; Condé, IV, 144; Cal. F. 1562, p. 552.

Resuming their campaign, the Huguenots marched toward Normandy. Queen Elizabeth was angered because they had seemed to make peace without her and had apparently agreed that she should be asked to surrender Havre de Grace. The Prince of Condé, with characteristic gallantry, begged the English Ambassador to ask the Queen to send him a scarf of her colors to wear in this "God's quarrel and yours," as her soldier, "which, he says, he will never fail to be during his life. I was very loath to have mixed matters of such gravity with matters of such a nature as this, but very importunately the Prince pressed me thereunto and therefore it may please you to consider it." [1]

The army of the Crown, commanded by the Constable, followed in the direction taken by the Huguenots, but on a somewhat shorter course and in ten days they threatened the Huguenot flank and brought them to battle. The Triumvirate had about eighteen thousand men to their enemy's twelve thousand, but in cavalry the Huguenots outnumbered them more than two to one. Condé opened the battle with a dashing charge upon the center. The dense battalion of six thousand Swiss mercenaries which held it was shaken, seventeen of their captains were killed and they were driven backwards. Coligny had immediately followed by an attack upon the royal left, which was completely broken and driven from the field. The Constable himself was wounded in the face and taken prisoner and some of the officers of his routed troops did not draw rein until they had brought the palace word that the Huguenots were victorious. That part of the army of the King which still kept the field had been pivoted backwards until the line was almost at right angles to its first position. But hard fighting and this turning movement had very much disordered the Huguenot ranks. The Duke of Guise, who, without nominal command, really led the right wing, had held his troops inactive during all this earlier stage of the fight. One of the Constable's sons, after seeing his brother killed by his side, had been driven

[1] Forbes, II, 126, 250.

back upon Guise's troops and he begged him to charge and save his father from defeat. "No, my son," answered the great captain, "it is not yet time." Not until fighting and victory had completely disorganized the Huguenots, did he advance in a charge, which drove their disordered battalions from the field. The Prince of Condé's horse was killed under him in the retreat, he was taken prisoner and but for the Admiral the entire Huguenot army would have been broken in hopeless rout. That experienced fighter made mistakes in attacks, but he was always at his best in the face of defeat. He had foreseen the disaster, for a short time before when some of his captains had begun to shout "Victory!" he had checked them and pointing towards the solid masses of the Catholic right motionless behind the woods, said, "You are fooling yourselves, wait until that great cloud bursts upon us." [1]

Now when the day seemed lost by such a turn in the tide of victory, he, with equal suddenness, restored the fortunes of the field. Taking advantage of the shelter of a little coppice, he rallied a force of cavalry and suddenly fell upon the Catholic troopers disordered by their rapid charge. Guise ordered the Marshal St. André to meet this new danger but, when he tried to check the advancing Huguenots, his men were broken, his horse was killed under him and he surrendered to a young man whom a few years before he had stripped of all the lands of his wife's dowry. The young man, who had nourished one of those longings for vengeance which in the men of that time were often as strong as a hopeless passion for a woman, murdered his prisoner with a pistol. Night was now falling and both sides were exhausted. Guise had a reserve of Spanish infantry which had not yet been engaged at all and it was coming up into action. The Admiral therefore, in good order and unpursued, withdrew from the field of battle.[2]

Neither side would admit defeat. The Huguenots had

[1] B. N. It. 1722 f. 627; de la Noue, 394.
[2] D'Aumale, Whitehead and contemporary sources.

lost their infantry, but the best part of their force, the French cavalry, was practically unhurt. From a mere military point of view, both sides had gained because the enemy had captured their commanders-in-chief, for Guise and Coligny were better generals than the Constable and the Prince of Condé. But the Huguenots had lost very few men of mark and the slaughter and wounding of leaders on the other side had been large. More than ever the Duke of Guise became the prop of the cause of uncompromising orthodoxy and persecution. Indeed, a moderate Catholic shrewdly remarked that it seemed to him that the real victor was the Duke of Guise, because the capture of the Constable and the death of Marshal St. André left him without any rival with whom to share his glory.[1]

Catherine was none too well pleased with the battle or the situation. When the Venetian Ambassador told her she ought to thank God for so great a victory, she made rather vague replies expressing her regret for the slaughter. To the English Ambassador she said she knew both victories and defeats hurt her son. Catherine was not alone in this attitude. Her reluctance to continue the war had been supported so strongly in December by the majority of the royal council that the Venetian Ambassador reported: "Although the royal council is composed only of those of unquestioned orthodoxy, they are filled with fear and suspicion of Spain and strongly in favor of peace." In order to force Catherine's hand and to free themselves from responsibility in case of a defeat, the leaders of the army had tried, five days before the battle, to compel Catherine to order them to fight, but she had parried the attempt with her usual quick wit. The first messenger has left an account of his mission:

"I travelled all night and arrived in the morning before the Queen Mother and the King were dressed. Her Majesty expressed her regret at seeing the interests of the Crown staked on the hazard of a civil battle. The nurse of the King, who

[1] Coligny Lett. pntd. Forbes, II, 297. Pasquier (2), IV, 19.

was a Huguenot, came in, and all three went to see the King, who was not yet up. The Queen Mother said, 'It's a strange thing that experienced captains should send to ask the advice of a woman and a child about battles' and then evidently filled with great grief, she said mockingly, turning to the nurse, 'Nurse, they are sending to ask women what they think about fighting. What do you think about it?' The nurse, following the Queen into the King's room, said several times that, since the Huguenots weren't willing to accept reasonable terms, she thought they ought to fight. She kept on saying this over and over again. Finally the Queen made the talkative nurse go out, dismissed all the others, and speaking seriously said: 'I won't send any other message than what I have already said.' The second messenger arrived in the afternoon, but, although he insisted upon being heard by the council, he could get no other reply except that the leaders of the army ought to do whatever seemed best to them." [1]

The battle therefore left Catherine determined to make peace as quickly as possible by any compromise she could persuade both parties to accept. She wrote this very plainly to the Cardinal of Lorraine, who was one of the French envoys to the Council of Trent.

"May God grant, my cousin, that this victory for which we are bound to praise and thank Him, may give us the chance of a good peace which shall restore this state to the tranquillity which I desire for it and which is necessary in order to save it from destruction. God grant that from where you are we may see arise a holy and serious reformation of the things which are depraved in the Church of God, and that it may be the cause of a general union and concord in religion." [2]

There was indeed every reason why France should have peace. We cannot suppose, indeed, that the sardonic absurdity of a war where both sides claimed to be fighting for the gospel of Christ, was evident to any of those who might have had any particular influence in stopping it. That was not in the spirit of the times; though there were a few

[1] B. N. It. 1722 f. 653 ib. 1723 f. 166; Cal. F. 591; Castelnau, Bk. IV. He was the messenger.

[2] Letts. I, 456.

outside the contest who felt it. For instance, a young law student of Bordeaux wrote about this time in a Latin poem addressed to Charles IX: "Is this the love of religion? Does God really advise the accursed strife of a civil war? . . . God is never pleased by a sacrifice of human blood. Piety cannot be fought for with arms." But there were reasons for peace which appealed to men who could not place this war in the perspective of truth. Catherine's dislike of it, based on her hatred of the Guise, her jealousy for her own authority, her deadly fear of Spain, were only strengthened by the lapse of time, and she wanted peace at almost any price. In addition, the exhaustion of the treasury was becoming so evident that even many zealous Catholics began to see the impossibility of continuing the war.

But the members of the extreme orthodox party only redoubled their opposition to any sort of compromise. In Paris suspected Huguenots were daily either beaten to death in the streets, or thrown into the river. The Parlement of Paris prepared a list of one hundred and thirty-five inhabitants of Orleans, seven ecclesiastics, eighteen lawyers and the rest shopkeepers and merchants of various sorts, who were to be immediately hanged as soon as the city was taken. Catherine was exceedingly hated by these ardent Catholics. It was whispered around that among her waiting-women there were not four who were orthodox Roman Catholics. This opposition found a spokesman, whom Catherine could not face when, early in February, Guise came from the camp where he was besieging Orleans and had a long talk with both the Queen Mother and his prisoner, the Prince of Condé. Returning to the camp, he pushed the siege with such vigor that he hoped, with the aid of ten cannon the Queen Mother sent him, to force a surrender.[1]

But on the eighteenth day of February, returning in the first darkness of the evening to his quarters after inspecting

[1] Courteault (3), 51; B. N. It. 1723 f. 76; ib. 1725 f. 105, fds. fr. 3180; ib. 3952 f. 57; A. N. K. 8. Feb. 1563, ib. 1500, f. 27, ib. Feb. 5 ib., f. 15. Condé, II, 130; B. N. It. 1722, f. 674.

a battery, he was shot in the back by an assassin and died in a few days. His murderer was Jean Poltrot, Lord of Merey, a Huguenot nobleman, twenty-six years old, who had joined the Catholic camp as a pretended convert some days before. Guise was almost unaccompanied and the murderer at once galloped into the woods and escaped. A huge reward was immediately offered for him. He became confused in the forest, wandered in a circle, and was arrested thirty-six hours later not far from the scene of his crime. Among the troops of Soubise where he had served, Poltrot had acquired a reputation for reckless daring, but was laughed at a good deal because he was always talking of how he intended to kill the Duke of Guise.[1]

Catherine examined him in the presence of members of her council and a few days later reported to the Duchess of Savoy what the assassin said:

"He told me voluntarily and without any pressing that the Admiral had given him a hundred écus to do this evil deed, and that he did not want to do it, but that Beza and another preacher had persuaded him and assured him that if he did it, he would go straight to heaven. Hearing that, he decided to carry out the deed, and, in addition, he said that the Admiral had sent sixty assassins to kill Guise, the Duke of Montpensier, Sansac, Cypierre and myself; that I should do well to keep a strict watch over my children and to take great care of my person, because he hated me very much and, among the others who had been sent he named a certain red-headed man, who yesterday was arrested in the court of the château at Blois. So you see, Madame, how that righteous man who says that he doesn't do anything except on account of religion, wants to put us out of the way. In spite of all that I am trying to make a peace, because I see well that during this war he will in the end kill my children and strip us of all our best people, because, to tell the truth, we have made a very great loss in that man (Guise), because he was the greatest captain in the realm. No one can know what will happen if the war lasts, because the Constable is a prisoner in Orleans and we have no man to command our army, except the Marshal Brissac, and he is not physically able to do it. Nevertheless I must make him believe that he is."

[1] Soubise, 72.

Catherine then goes on to beg her sister-in-law to come and bring her husband, because "If we have peace you will be able to help us in many ways and if war lasts I leave you to think how much the Duke of Savoy will be necessary to us and you with him." [1] Catherine soon recovered from the panic which this letter shows. The red-headed man, when he was arrested, proved that he was an innocent Roman Catholic, and Catherine recovered her shrewd judgment and began to point out the absurdities in Poltrot's first confession. The question of whether any of it was true has been much debated. He alternately retracted and reasserted his accusations against the Admiral and his friends in a way hard to explain, except as the vagaries of terror in a man whose courage had completely broken down in the face of torture and death. He was finally burnt with red-hot irons and then torn in pieces by four horses, and in the midst of that terror, and beside himself with agony, he still alternately repeated and denied his accusations.[2]

The enemies of the Huguenots made the best possible use of Poltrot's confession. It was written out next day, manifestly not in the words in which Poltrot had uttered it, printed and sent to the Huguenot camp with the hope of causing a revolt among the German mercenaries. Coligny published a reply in which he said he had employed Poltrot as a spy, giving him twenty écus for his first mission and when he brought some news from Guise's camp he gave him a hundred, in order that he might buy a good horse to go back again and get more news. He had heard him say that it would be easy to kill the Duke of Guise, but had made no reply to the remark, considering it rather as the idle bragging of a man in whom he had none too much confidence, but whose services he was willing to use. He was glad that Guise was dead because he was an enemy of God and the King. After information had come to him that Guise had hired assassins to kill him and his brother, whenever he had

[1] Letts. I, 516.
[2] De Thou, III, 403.

heard anyone say that if he could, he would kill Guise even in his own camp, he had not attempted to turn him from such a design, but "on his life and his honor he had never sought out or solicited anyone to do this, neither by word, nor by money, nor by promises, directly or indirectly." [1] The weightiest and most impartial modern historians have seen in the very frankness of this bald statement an indication of truthfulness.

Coligny evidently regarded the death of the Duke as the just judgment of God upon a very wicked man and neither he nor Beza, who swore he had never spoken to Poltrot about the subject, had a single word of condemnation for the cowardly crime. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that the wife and son of the murdered man regarded Coligny as the murderer.

As we have seen, Catherine, because of her own past experience and the advice of many of those who were near to her, feared Guise. A curious record of the attitude toward him in the inner circle of her friends and servants, is found in a secret letter written to her by the French Ambassador in Madrid the day after Guise was assassinated. It was therefore written before the news reached Madrid, for the swiftest couriers from Paris to Madrid took three days for the journey. He tells Catherine her daughter wants him to write and tell her that the friends of France at the Spanish court are much astonished to see the effort to make peace given up and it makes them the more sad "because it pleases those who do not love us, and we get word from France that one man [he means Guise] is the cause. . . . I will say freely that there is only one danger: that is to say if they [the Guise] attain the position they desire, it will be very difficult to reduce them again as much as one would want to. I beg you burn this letter." It was suspected by a number of people that Catherine and her close servants felt in this way about Guise and therefore the suspicion was whispered at court that she had hired Poltrot. There is no

[1] Condé, IV, 292.

evidence whatever to support it and it is highly improbable.[1]

Many of the Huguenots were much less restrained even than Coligny. A flood of poetry celebrated the death of the tyrant (Guise) and of the martyr (Poltrot). "Henry, Francis, Guise and Anthony," sang one poet, "tried to ruin the church of God and they are all dead by divine judgment." Poems on Poltrot's execution called him the most holy man of our time and bade him ascend to heaven where God would open for him the gate. For some years at least songs were written on the anniversary of Poltrot's death, which hailed him "as the happy man chosen of God" and "the tenth Paladin, the liberator of France." [2] L'Histoire Ecclesiastique, which is a sort of official apologetic history of the Reformed church and the Huguenot party, has no word of blame for Poltrot, but says that just before he did the deed "he prayed God very ardently to grant him the grace to change his intention if what he did was not agreeable to Him, or else to give him courage to kill the tyrant and deliver France from so accursed a tyranny."

It is difficult for a modern reader to understand how many sincerely religious people could regard acts of treacherous and cowardly murder as the glorious deeds of martyrs, but he might as well give up the attempt to understand the sixteenth century unless he admits the fact that it was so. The killing of one of their own side was always regarded as an inspiration of the devil, but the highest level to which most good men of the sixteenth century on either side of the great controversy on religion could rise at the news of the assassination of one of the enemies of their cause was, usually, the feeling that it was a mysterious providence of God, inflicting His just vengeance on a tyrant or a seducer.

The funeral of the Duke was magnificent. Catherine wrote admirable letters of condolence to his family and showed every sign of regret for his death and honor to his

[1] Castelnau, II, 182, 218; Cabie (1), pntd. 116; Cal. F. 1564, p. 163. See Note.

[2] Chansonnier, II, 273, Hist. Ecc. II, 349.

memory. She also scrupulously maintained her promise to the Duchess of Guise that the office of Grand Master which the Duke had taken away from the Constable should be inherited by the young Duke, in spite of the Constable's desire to get it back. Guise had been a soldier all his life, but he had earned in youth a reputation for humanity which could not be entirely destroyed even by the "Massacre of Vassy." A strong critic of his family labeled him "a gentle and moderate spirit" too much ruled by his "impetuous and violent" brother, the Cardinal of Lorraine. A Huguenot warrior historian called him "a great captain, excellent in all his faculties." The Venetian Ambassador wrote that among the many excellent officers of France, none equalled Guise in wisdom and skill, and indeed he seems the ablest general of his time. His religious zeal was pronounced, and one of his bitterest enemies could only comment on it: "He was so earnest in his religion that he thought nothing evil that maintained it." [1]

There was no one now left who could oppose Catherine's desire for peace. Indeed Guise himself on his death bed advised her to make peace immediately on the best terms she could. Apparently her first thought about the best way to establish peace was an idea which very much puzzled contemporary historians. She sent an envoy to the Duke of Würtemberg, and offered him the supreme office under the King, of Lieutenant-General, which had been held successively by the King of Navarre and the Duke of Guise, and which would now naturally fall, so long as the King remained a minor, to the Prince of Condé. The idea of having the function of maintaining order and the command of the armed forces of the state in the hands of a foreigner, seemed almost as strange to Frenchmen then as it would seem to Frenchmen now. But it would not seem strange to an Italian. The intense violence and mutual suspicion of the factions in the various states of Italy had

[1] Letts. I, 512, 513, 519; de Thou, II, 682; d'Aubigné, II, 117; Tommaseo, I, 496; Cal. F. 1563, p. 157.

made it the custom for several generations to have a foreign podestà, who was employed at a fixed salary to maintain order because neither of the parties would trust an adherent of the other to control the armed forces of the state. Whether Catherine really intended to employ the Duke of Würtemberg as national podestà or not we cannot be sure, for it is just as probable that she only intended to create a diversion which might stop the plans entertained in Germany of taking advantage of the division of France to recover the three bishoprics of Metz, Toul and Verdun which her husband had conquered from the Emperor. If the plan was serious, it failed, for the Duke of Würtemberg declined to consider the offer.[1]

After his brother's burial, the Cardinal of Lorraine, finding that he had no weight whatever in the royal council, left the court and retired to his archbishopric, and the Queen Mother, freed from all opposition, arranged according to her convenience for a conference looking toward peace.[2]

The Admiral was in Normandy, where with the help of the English, he had been taking towns and rapidly extending his mastery of the country. He could not therefore be present. But each side brought its prisoners and the Constable and the Prince conferred with each other and with the Queen Mother. The interview had been arranged on a barge which was moored to a little island in the river just above Orleans. Catherine, with her restless love of exercise, preferred to go ashore and walk up and down, which they did for two hours. The next day they met again on the island and talked for three hours in a very friendly way. The Prince was in his usual merry mood and it was noticed that when the Queen left him she was laughing heartily. The result of these conferences was the Edict of Amboise, published on the 19th of March, 1563. The higher nobles were granted the free exercise of their religion for them-

[1] De Thou, II, 400, "légèreté d'une femme." Hist. Ecc., Note Editor, 355.

[2] B. N. It. 1725 f. 56, 208.

selves and their dependents. Lesser nobles had liberty of worship only for their families, and if they lived in a town or village they must have permission from their overlord. Congregations of the Reformed church which could not receive shelter in the castles of the nobles, might worship publicly in a place appointed in any town which had been Huguenot on the 7th of March, and in addition, in the suburbs of one town in each sénéchaussée and bailliage of the kingdom.[1] This limitation of the number of places where the Reformed worship might be held was a restriction of the liberty accorded by the Edict of January.

Although the bulk of those with political influence felt that peace was necessary, this Edict was not received with universal applause. Seventy-two ministers of the Reformed church protested to Condé that, as he had taken arms to support the Edict of January, he ought not to permit any diminution of the liberty it granted. They insisted that the King should receive the Reformed church under his protection and "to close the door to all heresies and schisms and the troubles which can arise from these things, he ought to punish vigorously all atheists, libertines, Anabaptists and other heretics or schismatics." The main points of this protest were supported by the Admiral, who returned from Normandy with the army a few days after the accord was made. He said the Protestants were never in better condition than they were at that moment, whereas their enemies were demoralized by the loss of their leaders. The war ought to have been fought to a victory and the least that should have been accepted was the entire Edict of January. Condé evidently expected to obtain a very easy administration of the Edict, for Catherine told him that the death of Guise had no less set her free than it had him, because "by the forces he had about the King and her, she was no less a prisoner than Condé had been," and the Huguenot leader wrote to Elizabeth that he expected to see the Reformed doctrine spread very rapidly, for "it was more probable that there

[1] Cal. F. 200, Isambert 14, p. 135.

would be a lack of ministers to distribute the truth, than of places which wished to receive it." [1]

The first of the nine recurrent French civil wars about religion had ended in the victory of the Huguenots. It had not been the result of a planned conspiracy, like the abortive conspiracy of Amboise, or the still more abortive conspiracy for which Condé was condemned to death at the end of the reign of Francis II. Infractions of the Edict of January, the seizure of churches by the Huguenots, the killing of Huguenots by the orthodox, sometimes by mobs, sometimes under cover of the law, Huguenot murders in reprisal, like those of Fumel and de la Mothe Gondrin, Lieutenant-Governor of Dauphiny, with sporadic local wars in the south of France, brought about an almost unbearable tension. The killing at Vassy made a general rush to arms, "for the greater part of the nobility having heard of the execution at Vassy, driven by good will and partly by fear, made up their minds to come near to Paris on the chance that the protectors of the Church might need them. In that way the gentry of highest standing left the provinces with ten, twenty, or thirty of their friends, and found their way to the main body, hiding their arms, sleeping at the inns or in the fields, and paying their way liberally." [2]

But the victory of the Huguenots in this spontaneous movement of church against state was more apparent than real. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that if the adherents of the Calvinistic doctrine ever had any chance to persuade the French people to renounce the Roman obedience and establish a national church, after the model of the churches of England, some of the Swiss cantons, some of the German states and the Scandinavian kingdoms, they lost that chance by taking arms. It is probable that the influence of the Reformed church in France, either actual or potential, was never as great after the 1st of April, 1562, as it had been before. At least this was the opinion of the

[1] Hist. Ecc. II, 422; Castelnau, I, 150; pntd. App. d'Aumale, I, 312, 313.
[2] De la Noue: "I was present."

Venetian Ambassador, who wrote to the Senate: "If it had not been for the war, France would be at present Huguenot, because the people were so rapidly changing their faith and the ministers had acquired such credit among them that they persuaded them whatever they wished. But when they passed from words to arms and commenced to rob, to ruin and to kill, employing a thousand cruelties, the people commenced to say, 'What sort of a religion is this? These men pretend to understand the Gospel better than others and where do they find any indication that Christ commanded us to take the goods of our neighbors, and to murder our comrades?' " [1] Before the war was over, the poet Ronsard called on Beza to spare his native land. "Preach no more in France a gospel of arms, a Christ decked with pistols, all blackened with smoke, with a steel cap on his head, and in his hand a broad cutlass, red with human blood." The Huguenots were fighting in self-defense, but it seemed to France that they were fighting for conquest.

[1] Rel. I, 4, p. 187; Ven. Amb., 1569; Ronsard, VII, 22.

CHAPTER XVII

PEACE AND POLITICS. ENGLAND AND SPAIN

No one rejoiced more heartily over peace than Catherine. She wrote to the Marshal Montmorency, in whose moderate counsels she reposed a good deal of confidence:

"Peace is a public necessity so plainly perceived by everybody that there is no one who ought not to receive this good as a special grace and favor from God, the weight of whose hand ought to make us recognize how much He is angered with us and that this peace made by His bounty is a sign that He has lessened His anger and had pity on this poor people. . . . And besides, I will tell you between us two that the Admiral has not less than seven thousand cavalry. Think, I beg you, isn't it a good reason to call this a lucky peace, knowing what we know also of the forces which are getting ready in Germany, beside what the kingdom of England is raising on its side and the Empire is doing in order to get ready to recover Metz?" [1]

The foreign power from which Catherine thought danger was most imminent just at this particular moment, was England; for Elizabeth had already a good foothold in France which she was entirely unwilling to relinquish because her allies, the Huguenots, had made peace. Elizabeth had succeeded to the throne of England two years before the death of Francis II gave Catherine the chief authority in France. The young girl of twenty-five lacked Catherine's experience, and she was confronted with very much the same problem—how to save a kingdom financially exhausted, from the horrors of a civil war caused by difference of opinion in religion, which might deliver it a prey to powerful neighbors. She shared Catherine's fundamental indifference as to the theological questions in dispute; though she knew more about them than Catherine did.

[1] Letts. X, 96.

But, unlike her sister Mary, religion was not to her the chief interest of life. She rather resembled her father in desiring above all things to be the strong sovereign of a great nation. In spite of her inexperience, she had two enormous advantages over her neighboring Queen in the great task which lay before her. She was native to her realm and instinctively understood and shared the feelings of her people. Her power was her own and not the power of a regent. Though less practised, she was as clever as Catherine at cajolery and just as lacking in any scruples about truthfulness.

Elizabeth feared two things—civil war in England, caused by difference of opinion in religion, and a general European war to suppress Protestantism by force, in which she knew she would be forced to become the chief of the Protestants. She made an abrupt change in the policy of her predecessor and sister Mary, but, in marked contrast to Catherine's attempt to stand between the two parties, she threw in her lot decidedly with one. She swept away all her sister's legislation in regard to religion and reëstablished the national church of her father, renouncing the Roman obedience and adopting a creed decidedly Protestant. She abandoned not only her sister's party but also her sister's policy of active persecution, and, although the Roman Catholic worship was forbidden by law, in all other respects she tried to make the position of quiet Roman Catholics as tolerable in England as was possible. Above all, peace and order was sternly maintained. The Catholic dissenters were neither allowed to seize churches, nor did they suffer from mob attacks as in France. This policy in meeting the first danger, a policy to which her inclinations and her inherited position naturally urged the daughter of Anne Boleyn, at once exposed her to the second danger. As the strongest Protestant power, England would naturally become the great objective of any general movement to suppress Protestantism by force, and, in the house of Guise, such a movement putting forward the claim of their niece to the

throne of England would find leaders who joined personal interest to zeal. Almost from the beginning of her reign, therefore, Elizabeth had begun, as far as her foreign policy was concerned, to do three things. She formed secret connections with the Huguenot party, and as a corollary she attacked the power of the Guise. She encouraged the Protestant party in Scotland in its opposition to the Crown, in order to limit the availability of Mary Stuart as an orthodox claimant to the English throne. Thirdly, she had tried to unite the Protestant princes of Germany in a defensive league to defend Protestantism against any common attack by the Roman Catholic powers.[1]

Although Elizabeth and Catherine during their whole life were always exchanging honeyed words, it is quite evident, to anyone who reads their letters in the light of events, that neither had any great confidence in the other and that both were entirely justified in their suspicions. In spite of her astuteness, vanity often led Elizabeth into incautious speech, a mistake into which Catherine rarely fell, and just about this time we have it quoted from her own lips that she regarded her relations with the Queen Regent of France as a sort of a game of wits. She said to a foreign envoy that "she was an Englishwoman and that the Queen of France was a Florentine and now it would be seen which of the two would handle her affairs the better." What is more, Catherine knew that Elizabeth did not have any too high an opinion of her ability, because it had been reported to her that she had said that one who was born a merchant's daughter could not be altogether competent to govern a kingdom.[2]

Elizabeth seemed to lay her cards on the table at the beginning of the game, by declaring to Catherine that the origin of the war was the personal quarrel between the Prince of Condé and the Duke of Guise, and that the Duke of Guise, having drawn to his side all those who desired to

[1] Cal. F., 1560, Dec.
[2] Granvelle (2), I, 552; B. N. It. 1725, f. 25.

suppress dissent from the Pope, had threatened to attack the Prince of Condé, whereupon the Prince of Condé had prepared to defend himself by getting the allegiance of those who "feared the invasion of their consciences." She advised Catherine to keep out of the quarrel and try to control both parties without belonging to either. The fight might grow into a general war about religion and she personally would not suffer the House of Guise to become too strong, lest they should attack her through their niece, the Queen of Scotland; "as they had tried to do in the time of Francis II." Elizabeth accepted, however, the phrase of one of her diplomatic agents: "Fallere fallentem non est fraus," and did not show her best card in this seemingly frank letter. She did not scruple to give instructions to her envoys, to make the Huguenots think that she was able to stand between the two parties, and to keep in mind that if foreigners are to come in at all she "may as well make her profit either of accord or discord as any neighbor." [1]

The particular profit which Elizabeth wanted to get out of this trouble was the return of Calais, which had been lost by her sister. She said nothing about this at first to the Huguenots, though they could not have been ignorant that, by the terms of the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis, Calais ought to be surrendered to England by France in five years and that France would never keep the agreement unless forced to do so. In October Elizabeth had landed six thousand men at Havre de Grace, which the Huguenots handed over to her, sent some money and promised more to pay the German mercenaries. What she really intended is shown in her letter to her envoys in Germany. "The Queen has resolved to keep Havre until these troubles cease and she is more assured of Calais: such reasons as the world should understand, she has caused to be printed; which Cecil will send to them." [2]

After the loss of the battle of Dreux, Coligny, who re-

[1] Forbes, II, 23; Cal. F. 1562, p. 637.
[2] Cal. F., 1563, p. 3, p. 74, p. 360.

treated into Normandy, had asked Elizabeth for ten thousand men and the money to pay his German mercenaries. One of the great Huguenot nobles was sent into England with a blank sheet of parchment bearing the signatures of Condé, the Admiral and nine other Huguenot chiefs. On that parchment there was written the so-called treaty of Hampton Court, which provided among other things that Elizabeth should keep the town of Havre de Grace until the town of Calais was restored to her, either before or at the time set for its restoration in the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis (1567). This provision of the treaty with England had been entirely neglected by the Huguenot leaders in making their peace and Elizabeth had reason to accuse them of want of good faith toward her.[1]

The Admiral and the Prince of Condé urged upon her with perfect truth that if she should "stain this with a private matter of her own and under pretense of religion seek her own gain, it should be dishonor to her and how evil the papists and all others would speak of her." But when she refused to listen or to give up her own advantage for the sake of the common cause, they were not strong enough to take the stand of one "who sweareth to his own hurt and changeth not." If the transaction may be so interpreted as to free the Huguenots of a lack of patriotism, the charge of breach of a promise made to their ally remains. The truth is they had laid themselves open to the sharpest criticism by bringing the English into France and putting the port of Havre de Grace into their hands. It was a great rallying cry when the King called on his subjects to "drive the English and Germans from France." [2]

The group of moderate men, composed largely of old servants of the Crown, expressed their delight with the peace, but it was exceedingly unpopular with the extreme

[1] Cal. F., 1563, pp. 266-273.
[2] Cal. F., 1563, Mar. 30, ib. p. 253, 539; B. N. It. 1722, f. 586; Condé, IV, 44; Cal. F. 1562, p. 377. See Note.

orthodox party. In Paris very indecent attacks upon the Queen Mother were freely posted about the city and it was openly said among the nobles of the extreme faction in the south of France that the Estates General had made a great mistake in giving the regency to Catherine. The Spanish Ambassador took it upon himself to become the mouthpiece of discontent and the Queen Mother finally told him that he talked as if "he were the governor and ruler of France." The Venetian Ambassador had the same feeling about Catherine's surrender to Huguenot influence, although he did not express it to Catherine. He writes that she is putting Huguenots into all the vacant places; as, for example, the two new marshals she has made, Vielleville and Bordillon, and he asked to be relieved because he feels sure that he is no longer *persona grata*. "He has been obliged to oppose so much the people in whose hands the government is now put, that he is called a papist." [1]

Catherine paid but little attention to opposition and criticism. She felt sure she had done not only the right, but the absolutely necessary thing. She said to the Ambassador of Tuscany, "I was forced to do what I have done. I am certain that this question can never be resolved by arms. Even if we had won a battle, we should have had to grant to the Huguenots conditions very much like those we have granted. If we were beaten, on the other hand, the whole kingdom would have fallen into their hands. I have therefore at any price stopped the war which couldn't be anything but disastrous." [2]

The war had brought great misery: the tilling of fields in many places was abandoned and a great number of cities and villages had been sacked and burnt. "The poor peasants driven from their houses, held for ransom and robbed, today by one and tomorrow by the other side, abandoning all they possessed, were flying like wild animals through the

[1] B. N. Dupuy, 523 f. 2, B. N. It. 1725, f. 114, f. 105, 111 ib. 1726, f. 106; Nouvs Acqs. 20598 f. 69, A. N. K. 1509, f. 106.
[2] Palandri, 104.

fields in order not to be at the mercy of those who had no mercy." [1]

In spite of the opposition of many of the parlements to registering the Edict, a flood of private and public protests and the formation of associations of Catholics to support religion, Catherine proceeded to do her best to enforce the Edict. She wrote, for example, to Monluc to say that the Prince of Condé had sent word to the Huguenots to lay down their arms and go home and live in obedience to the King, and she would see to it that they were allowed to live in peace, without anybody attacking them or troubling them. This can only be done by "strong and severe justice, which I am sure you will execute upon those, as much on one side as on the other, who may wish to contravene the present course, troubling the public peace and desiring to bring us back to the misery and calamity from which we have just escaped." When the train of the Prince of Condé's wife was attacked just outside the gates of Paris and one of her attendants was killed, Catherine herself ordered three of the captains who were concerned in the affair to be hung. When the Estates of Provence wrote that the return of the Huguenots to their homes "would excite a thousand vengeances and that they would sooner abandon their country than associate with those from whom they had received so much injury," [2] Catherine turned a deaf ear. All during the year, in spite of most discouraging news and terrible complaints from both sides, she tried to have the Edict upheld without fear or favor. She wrote a royal letter to the Ambassador in Spain that was justified by events. "Peace is being established little by little everywhere, for it is not possible that a trouble of such long standing could be pacified in a single day, but I hope that every day things will become more satisfactory."

Catherine rather skilfully turned one of her outstanding

[1] Castelnau, Bk. V, Ch. 1.

[2] Letts. I, 552; II, 29, 47, 60, 115, etc. B. N. Nouvs. Acqs. 20598, f. 84, 94, 97, 162, 171, 187, 195, fds. fr. 6001, f. 28, 32; 42 ib. 6627, f. 13; It. 1725, f. 17, 34; Dupuy, 523, f. 27.

dangers into a help. In spite of the exhausted finances of the Crown, the mutual suspicions of treachery and the opposition of some of her councillors, she insisted upon attacking the English garrison of six thousand men in Havre de Grace. She flung herself personally into the preparations for the siege with a zeal and activity she had never shown during the civil war, ordering sixteen new cannons mounted "so that we can give the town a furious battery with thirty or forty pieces" and buying large quantities of ammunition in Lorraine and Germany. She also gave direct orders for the conduct of operations during the opening days of the siege. The besieging army, in which the Huguenots joined the Catholics, was commanded by Condé, the Constable and the Marshals. Catherine brought the young King down the river and waited close by until the town was ready to surrender in the end of July, 1563. The garrison was allowed to retire to England with everything belonging to themselves and their Queen and on the first of August the Queen and the young King left the camp. Catherine followed this victory by having her son declare his majority before the Parlement of Rouen on the 17th of August, 1563, and the next day he touched those afflicted with the King's evil that by healing them he might prove that like his ancestors he was the anointed of God.[1]

The young lad of thirteen was certainly not yet anointed with the spirit of mature common-sense, as is shown by a curious document which has survived from this time. It is a wager made between the King and one of his gentlemen, Monsieur de Chaulnes, that three years from that day the King would be able to kiss his own foot. If he lost, the King promised to give a thousand crowns to certain named valets of his wardrobe. In spite of this chance record of skylarking with his attendants, he was a quiet boy and exceedingly obsequious to his mother, in whose hands the authority rested entirely.

[1] Letts. I, 520 ("I haven't a sou"), II, 26, 56; B. N. It. 1725, f. 18; Arch. C. I, p. 231; Letts. II, 85 N.

Catherine had now thoroughly developed her characteristic policy of balancing the parties and standing between the two so as to base her power upon their mutual jealousy. The jealousy was now chiefly on the side of the extreme orthodox party. Catherine and her old friend the Duchess of Guise had a stormy scene. The Spanish Ambassador who got his information almost entirely from the Guise faction wrote that there were "many heretics around the person of the King. Last Sunday his tutor sent to call him to vespers and he did not come. It was found that they were instructing him by reading to him a book called Pantagruel, written by an Anabaptist full of a thousand scoffs at religion and condemned as impious by the Sorbonne." The Ambassador complained that the Queen Mother was entirely in the hands of the Chancellor and the Admiral and his brothers and it was true that Catherine was using the advice and help of the Châtillon brothers as she had used it in the summer and fall before the civil war.[1]

The greatest of all Catherine's troubles was the insistent demand of the family of the Duke of Guise that Coligny should be tried for murder. In this situation the Admiral had been supported not only by his old comrade, the Prince of Condé, but also by his old antagonist, his uncle, the Constable. The affair dragged along until the widow, dressed in deep mourning, accompanied by all the ladies of her house and by a large number of princes and nobles, appeared before the King in church at the close of mass, fell upon her knees and asked that justice should be done for the death of her husband. The little King was much moved; tears came to his eyes, and he promised justice. Coligny refused to be tried before the Parlement of Paris, which he said had always been hostile to him, and insisted upon being heard only before the royal council. The rumor was that both sides were secretly mustering their adherents.

[1] Letts. II, 85, N. B. N. Port. Font. 305 f. 458 fds. fr. 3256; It. 1724 f. 31, 46, 123, 165, A. N. K. 1500, Sept. 30; ib. 1499, Nov. 23.

To escape trouble, the King finally took matters into his own hands by reserving the case to himself and promising to announce his decision at the end of three years. But hate remained unappeased.[1]

Even worse, the assassination of Guise seemed to become a fashionable model. During the next ten or twelve years the habit of cowardly murder by attacks from behind or by several men upon one, became a firmly established custom in France. This custom was regarded as an imported one. In 1563 the Provost of Paris, planning to hire assassins to murder an enemy, writes to a friend that he proposes to deal with him "in the Italian fashion." And Pasquier wrote of a man who "brooded in his soul during six entire years an Italian vengeance." The Protestant author of a book published in 1566 explains, in a chapter on "Some Homicides of our Times," what this means.

"Since France has learned the manner of Italy in the matter of killings and the habit has arisen of bargaining with 'assassins' (a new word, because it has been necessary to find new terms for new wickedness) to go and cut the throat of such and such people as one might bargain for some work with a mason or a carpenter . . . it would almost be a novelty to have several days pass without some such thing happening, whereas previously, perhaps in a man's whole life, he would not have known of a murder ten times. . . . We know that it was the ancient custom in France, kept more religiously than in any other country, to attack an enemy openly, not taking him without arms or otherwise at a disadvantage, but warning him and giving him the time to draw his sword, even considering it unfair to attack him two to one. . . . Of all which I know well that I have often heard the Italians make great fun. For, when they have once bitten the end of their finger by their teeth by way of menace, everybody knows that, if they attack their man in front, it is only because they are unable to attack him from behind. They take good care not to say 'defend thyself' and still better care not to attack him unless they are at least two to one." [2]

[1] B. N. It. 1724 f. 40; Condé, IV, 17.
[2] Cal. F., 1563, p. 92; Pasquier (1), Bk. IX, Ch. 20; Estienne, Ch. 18.

Ten years later a Catholic writer paints in the darkest colors the spread of this degenerate custom.

"In short, there is no sort of evil which those who call themselves nobles and gentlemen do not do nowadays and they make a virtue of every wickedness and principally of assassination, which is at the present so common among them, that the bravest and most ready of them do not deign or do not dare any longer to lay their hands on their sword against another, but they lie in wait for him to whom they wish evil or they cause him to be followed and ambushed by their killers, who fire upon him and kill him by shots of the pistol or arquebus; or, if indeed they draw their own swords, they do it without any warning to him whom they wish to assassinate, running their sword or dagger into him while they are saying good day to him and pretending to kiss him and embrace him. Behold the virtues which now stand out in our nobles and gentlemen of France! I am not talking except of the bad ones, the number of which exceeds by more than three to one the number of the good and virtuous."

About the same time the Estates General (1576) called for special laws against those who "hire themselves out for money to commit murder." [1]

That this evil custom of assassination which spread so rapidly, was not native but an importation was not the opinion of Frenchmen only; at least two Italians have recorded the same impression. The Nuncio wrote to the Cardinal of Como, "In France they are commencing to introduce very commonly that pestiferous custom of exacting vengeance for injuries with arquebus shots; a thing which a few years before was not even known to that nation." The Venetian Ambassador wrote to the Senate, "I do not understand that this nation has ever used those vendettas which are carried out in other countries by poisons, assassinations, or other means; which are here held in the very greatest abomination by all." The spread of this evil custom was of course enormously helped by the civil wars, in which, according to a writing dedicated to

[1] Haton, II, 854; Picot, G., II, 552.

Michel de l'Hospital, "it seemed less criminal and less dangerous to kill a man than a sheep." [1]

That Catherine felt these tremendous moral dangers that were pressing upon France, there is nowhere any evidence, but, curiously enough, we have just at this time a somewhat long record of her ideas about the way in which France ought to be ruled. The cause of her making it was as follows. She was very fond of riding, but apparently she rode with more boldness than skill. At all events, she had during her life a number of rather serious horseback accidents and her growing weight rendered falls dangerous. In September, 1563, while she was coming back from hunting, her hackney fell under her, injuring her head and arms. She made light of it, as she was wont to make light of any of her ailments, and not only refused to rest but continued to eat great quantities of melons and other fruits of which she was very fond. A dangerous illness followed. Others thought of the possibility of her death, and perhaps Catherine was at least made mindful of mortality, for she dictated a long letter to her son; a thing otherwise superfluous; for she never had been separated from him for more than a few days at a time and manifestly never intended to be. She gave him advice how to reign in order to restore the kingdom to the flourishing condition in which it was in the time of his father and his grandfather. One half of the letter is occupied by a program for the royal day. This was to be so regulated as to please the nobility by allowing them access to him in the morning while he is being dressed, and also by spending a good part of his time with them. At least twice a week he ought to give a ball after supper and twice a week or more he ought to join with his nobles in some athletic sport, "because I have often heard your grandfather say that two things are necessary to live in peace with the French, and to make them love their King: to keep them happy and to occupy them in some athletic exercise." "Every two weeks

[1] Arch. Vat., Sept., 1573; Nuncio Rel. I, 4, p. 240; Waddington ctd. 185.

or so you must give audience, for that pleases your subjects extremely." In addition, he must read all dispatches which arrive and receive all deputations from the provinces, taking care to speak to them every time they present themselves in his room. "I have seen your father and grandfather do this and when there was nothing else to talk about, they even went so far as to talk to them about their own household affairs." [1]

He must always carry around in his pocket two lists—one containing the names of all the royal officers even down to the very smallest in the kingdom, and the other the value of all the offices which are in the gift of the King. The instant he heard of a vacancy (and one or two of the chief men in each province ought to be charged with the duty of immediately notifying him of any vacancy) he should, by the use of these two lists, immediately fill it, writing the letter of notification himself and not handing it over to a secretary. If anybody importuned him for an office he never ought to be allowed to receive it. He ought to know the names of the chief people in every province of the kingdom and he should take pains to have in each province at least a dozen, more or less, to whom he ought to give a great deal of patronage. This would please them so much that they would keep him constantly informed of the smallest thing that stirred in their neighborhood. In every city of the kingdom he ought also to have three or four of the principal burghers and as many of the chief merchants who, quietly and without letting anybody else know anything about it, should be so favored by him that they would be willing to inform him at once of anything which he ought to know that happened either in the city government, or even in private homes.[2]

This letter is chiefly remarkable for what it leaves out. It is the letter of a clever politician and not of a statesman. Catherine wants her son to be careful to keep the distribu-

[1] B. N. Dupuy, 525 f. 47, C. C. C. 390 f. 219, A. N. K. 1500.
[2] Letts. II, 90.

tion of the patronage in his own hands, and to take measures to hear of everything that is going on all over the kingdom without letting it be known that he was doing so. But while this letter to her son on the art of reigning made no allusion to the grave problems which lay before him, the need of economy in administration, the reform of the ruined finances, the reform of the universities, the reform of justice, the establishment of a strong police, the decrease of hatred and factional spirit and the very delicate and complicated problems of foreign policy, it is evident by her action that so far as the problems of foreign politics were concerned, Catherine was not unaware of their existence. She attempted to meet them in a way so characteristic, that it is worth while to examine her action somewhat in detail as a typical instance of the spirit and method of her statecraft; though it is tiresome because of her habitual tendency to see in every international situation nothing quite as important as its potential relation to good marriages for her children.

The most pressing problem of foreign policy was the relation between France and England. Both of the women who presided over the destiny of those countries were too shrewd to push the war very energetically. Each understood entirely the truth of what the English envoy wrote home after he had had a talk with the Ambassador of Spain. The Spanish "would fain have the English and French together by the ears and they do as children do when they see two dogs rend each other's coats with their teeth; clap their hands and say 'Here, take him! That's a good dog!' Let him not go so; so should his master have sport whosoever had the worst." [1]

Catherine had also a special and very much more personal reason for not desiring to fight Elizabeth, or even weaken her. From two letters sent in the same packet, one to her daughter, the Queen of Spain, and the other to the Ambassador in Madrid, it appears that Catherine had got possession of a letter of the Cardinal of Lorraine, who was

[1] Cal. F. 1563, p. 342.

absent in the French delegation at the Council of Trent but "anxious to get back in one way or another to control the affairs of the kingdom." This intercepted letter made her able to understand entirely "the prettiest trick ever seen." He had talked to her in the beginning about marrying her daughter-in-law, the Queen of Scots, to the Archduke Charles, third son of the Emperor of Germany. She had shown no sign of objection, though she wanted him for her own daughter, Margaret. Lorraine again sent word that the ambassador of the King of Spain and the Constable had talked to him of marrying the Prince of Spain to the Queen of Scots and urged him to use his influence to bring it about. He commented on this offer that it was not his plan; that he preferred the marriage of Mary to the Archduke. "His brother, the Cardinal of Guise here, even offered to go to Scotland to persuade his niece not to accept the offer of the Prince of Spain, although he thought it would be difficult because being proud she would not desire, as the widow of the King of France, to marry a less important prince."

All the while Catherine knew, in a roundabout way by a third person, that the Cardinal of Lorraine was doing all that he could in Spain to promote this marriage and that the suggestion of it had come from him. She also knew that the Cardinal of Lorraine was secretly trying to get the Spanish prelates at the council to join in an attempt to declare the Queen of England incapable of wearing the crown, because she had left the Church. His object was to transfer the kingdom of England to the Queen of Scots in order to make her a more attractive match for the Spanish prince. He had also tried to have the King of Navarre declared a heretic by the Pope and his kingdom transferred to Spain.

"Unaware that I knew these facts, they proposed to me by a third person, that I should prevent this Spanish marriage which was being urged upon the Queen of Scots, by offering to marry her to one of my sons, from which you can easily see that he wants to hold three cards in his hand. . . . This same person

told me that the Queen of Scots had a good chance of getting the kingdom of England, since the Council of Trent will declare the Queen of England a heretic and incapable of ruling. It won't trouble her very much if there's nothing else but words to handle. So, remembering how much that vain hope of seeing their niece one day the Queen of England has already cost this kingdom, I pretended that I wanted to agree to the bargain suggested by my son-in-law (the King of Spain) and since he wanted the Queen of Scots for his son, that I should hope that God would give somebody else to my son, the Duke of Orleans, because he was the one who had been named as the probable husband for the Queen of Scots."

She went on to say that both the Ambassador and her daughter, the Queen of Spain, ought to move with the utmost cleverness and secrecy to block these plans without letting anyone know that they had any word from France about them. She explains that what she really wants is to marry the king to the eldest daughter of the Emperor and her younger son to the Princess of Spain and that the two kingdoms of France and Spain should then together make a kingdom for him.[1]

Here was a plot to block Catherine's plan for the marriage of her children which always occupied the chief place in her thoughts, to give another and greater crown to the Queen of Scots, whom she disliked, to increase enormously the power of the Cardinal of Lorraine, whom she hated and feared. To have Elizabeth strong and friendly to her was one of the best ways to prevent the success of any such plot. The strongest personal reasons, as well as her general dislike of war, urged Catherine towards peace with England.

Although both Queens were determined to have no more war, it took a long time to make peace. Elizabeth made an uncompromising demand for the restoration of Calais and a large sum of money. France threatened to break off negotiations, whereupon Elizabeth demanded a reaffirmation of the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis, by which Calais was to be

[1] Letts. X, 111.

restored in 1567. France threatened to resume the war, unless the hostages given for the ratification of the fulfillment of that treaty were returned, claiming that Elizabeth had violated all her rights under it by attacking France. Then the envoy said, "Give us five hundred thousand crowns and say nothing about Calais one way or the other." France refused but offered a hundred and twenty thousand crowns and the best diamond among the crown jewels for the immediate release of the French hostages. The negotiations were not made any smoother by the fact that the English Ambassador and the English Envoy had a furious quarrel with each other. Finally one day the Ambassador called the Envoy "arrant knave, traitor and such other names as came into his mind out of his good store and drew his dagger. I drew my dagger also. Mr. Somers stepped between us, but as he pressed with his dagger to come near me, I bade him stand back and not come nearer to me, or I would cause him to stand back, and give him such a mark as his bedlam furious head did deserve." [1]

Elizabeth drove the thriftiest bargain possible. She first bade her agents come down to four hundred thousand crowns, and, if the French stood on that, she bade them "use all the means they can to make the said sum at least three hundred thousand crowns." In case of failure they were not to break off the colloquy, but to talk about other things. "And yet afterwards to do their uttermost to make the sum no less than two hundred thousand crowns." But Catherine was as good a bargainer as Elizabeth and the money payments which finally accompanied the treaty were sixty thousand crowns down and sixty thousand later. There was no definite settlement about Calais but the rights of both sides were reserved.

One important article in the treaty established liberty of commerce between the two nations, cancelling a large number of the fees and exactions which were imposed in both kingdoms upon merchants, and this commercial treaty

[1] Cal. F. 1564, p. 104.

between France and England did a great deal to build up the trade between the two countries. Whether this paragraph came from Catherine or from the Chancellor or from somebody else, we do not know.[1]

Philip II was not very well pleased with the fact that Catherine had made peace with England and with her rebels. Apparently yielding to her solicitation, he had withdrawn his ambassador and replaced him by another, who was more agreeable to her, but not with the idea of stopping his protests against her policy of conciliation. On the contrary, he rather hoped his protests would be more effective coming from the lips of a man she did not dislike so much. He ordered the new Ambassador Alava "not to fail to frighten her and to repeat to her again and again that if she does not govern differently it will make me very much displeased, obliged as I am to take in hand the interests of the King, my brother. But before acting in this direction, wait until Chantonnay is gone, for the hatred which the Queen has for him would spoil everything." Alava carried out his directions by suggesting to Catherine that she was in great danger from the Prince of Condé, "for the King, my master, is afraid that his objects are clear enough and in the end he and his party will not find any other remedy for the dangerous situation except killing you and your son." She seemed much disturbed and in leaving said to him, "Tell the Constable this as plainly as you have told it to me." It is, however, doubtful whether Catherine was as much troubled by this sort of talk as the Ambassador believed. She always showed courage in the face of any physical danger and she was not to be frightened by loose talk of assassination. The fear she had always had in the back of her mind was the one she had already expressed to her Ambassador at Madrid. She was not the only one who was touched by this dread. There was in France "an opinion and firm belief that the King of Spain wants to make himself King of France under the pretense of defending the

[1] Dumont, V, 1, p. 126.

Roman Catholic religion with the aid of the house of Guise." This was only part of an increasing opinion, widely spread throughout all Europe, that the Spaniards "want to give law to the entire world." [1]

[1] A. N. K. ctd. Letts. II, 148, n.; A. N. K. 1501 f. 74; Granvelle (2) VII, 23; B. N. C. C. C. 395 f. 119. The phrase was common, e.g. Eng. Amb. 1723 f. 43.

CHAPTER XVIII

CATHERINE'S PLANS FOR FRANCE AND CHRISTENDOM

It was evident to Catherine that her danger from the overmastering power of Spain was closely connected with the internal difficulties of her son's kingdom and she began to feel certain that the best way to meet both external and internal dangers was to have an interview with her two most powerful neighbors, the King of Spain and the Emperor of Germany. The idea of such an interview had been originally suggested by the Pope in the end of the year 1563 with the object undoubtedly of forming a league for the extermination of heresy; although its ostensible object would probably have been resistance to the Turk. Catherine, however, had very different views about the desirable outcome of such a meeting. The eldest son of the Emperor, who had been elected King of the Romans or successor to the Emperor, had shown himself very favorable to efforts looking toward a reunion of the entire Church. Catherine told her ambassador to say to him that her object in holding this interview was "to see if we, who are the greatest and most powerful Christian princes, can agree upon some means other than arms for the pacification and repose of Christianity. Knowing that his desire and mine agree in that point, I hope something can be done in accordance with our desires. Even though the Pope and the King of Spain show themselves to be very difficult, we can work to persuade them to come to this conclusion." [1]

But the King of Spain said he was afraid of exciting the suspicions of Protestant Princes and provoking a general war about religion. He bluntly refused to come to any such meeting. Catherine therefore wrote to the King of the

[1] Letts. II, 110, 111.

Romans asking him to meet her secretly even though the King of Spain refused and spoke plainly to him of what, in this case as in all other phases of her foreign policy, was nearly always the central motive in her mind,—the marriages of her children. But in the beginning of the summer of 1564 the Emperor and his son, who at first seemed very anxious for the interview, suddenly dropped the subject so decidedly that Catherine felt obliged to dismiss it.[1]

Large sections of the kingdom continued to be much disturbed by the zeal or the hatred of people who did not in their hearts accept the peace and would not obey the royal Edict of Pacification. The focus of trouble was in the south, where Philip II had become mixed in very serious plots with Blaise de Monluc, Lieutenant-Governor of Guienne. Before the fall of Havre de Grace, Monluc had complained to Catherine of the pernicious activity of that strong Huguenot, the Queen of Navarre, who was undoubtedly infringing upon the Edict. He had warned her that "if she stands this from the Queen of Navarre she will make evident to the King of Spain that she cares more for the friendship of the Queen than for his friendship." Catherine, though ordering Monluc to make the Queen of Navarre keep within the Edict, refused to take against her the severe action he advised. Somebody, probably Philip II, then procured from the Pope a citation to the Queen of Navarre to appear in Rome to answer a charge of heresy, on pain of being deprived of her kingdom if she did not obey. Catherine at once took up her cause. In a letter from the King, she denounced this citation as illegal and injurious to him and begged the Pope to revoke it at once. She also told her ambassador to tell the Pope that he had no authority or jurisdiction over those who bear the title of King or Queen and that she would not protect her son's relatives and vassals.[2]

No action was ever taken on the citation, but a plot was

[1] Letts. II, 157, 182, 187.
[2] Monluc, IV, 246; Condé, II, 119; IV, 680; V, 669.

formed in France to kidnap the Queen of Navarre, carry her across the mountains into Spain and present her before the Inquisition. The plot was discovered through the embroiderer of the Queen of Spain, who told the French Ambassador what she had heard. The Ambassador sent his secretary to warn the Queen Mother and such measures were taken that the plot was blocked. Monluc wrote in his commentaries a denial of the fact that he was engaged in this conspiracy; but he also denied that he had any questionable relations with the King of Spain, which is not true. He acted as a spy for Philip and received a pension from him. That was no more than was done by many others, even in the royal council of France and of England, but certain things we know about his conduct are more ominous. A royal messenger was directed to ask him what forces and cities could be put into Spain's hands if they decided to invade, and whether there was any way of "getting hold of the person of the King in order to carry on the whole business with his authority and under his name." We do not know Monluc's answers to these questions, but, after he had been asked them, he remained on very friendly terms with the King of Spain, and his conduct was worse than shady. It is entirely characteristic of the dissimulation which was typical of the times that Catherine accepted Monluc's excuses although she knew they were suspicious, that Philip pretended to resent the citation of the Queen of Navarre to Rome, and that the Queen of Navarre, although perfectly well aware of the plot to carry her to Spain for the stake or the dungeon, sent a special messenger to thank Philip for his protests against her citation for heresy.[1]

Almost immediately after this shock to her already weak confidence in Philip, Catherine returned to the plan of an interview with him on the border of the two countries. The new Spanish Ambassador had a long talk with her about

[1] Cabie (1), 182, 246; de Thou, III, 497 (He knew the embroiderer's children); A. N. K. ctd. Forneron, I, 297; Marcks 111; B. N. Dupuy, 523 f. 71; Courteault (2), 488.

it in the middle of the winter of 1564. She said, "It's evident that the King of Spain doesn't care about seeing me." He replied, "That depends on you, Madame, for you won't let him know what you want to talk about at this meeting." He added that the meeting would probably create great suspicion, and wanted to know what good could be expected from it to balance that suspicion. The Queen replied ironically, "You seem to think, Monsieur Ambassador, that the earth will tremble as soon as we meet." "Well," he answered, "it isn't possible to shut one's eyes to the dangers attending such an interview." Interrupting him she said, "The affairs of religion might be arranged if we could only meet" and she promised to do all in her power to bring them to a proper situation little by little. "Little by little!" cried the ambassador, "But that's just exactly what the King doesn't want." [1]

It must not be supposed that, during all these trying months since the close of the active operations of the English war, Catherine's thoughts and energies were entirely absorbed in the dangers of the state or the pleasures of statescraft. She shared to the full that love of elaborate ceremony, splendid costumes and magnificent furniture which was so characteristic of most of the rulers of the sixteenth century. The treasury was never so empty that Catherine did not feel able to spend money lavishly for articles of luxury or of art. The English war was scarcely ended by the Treaty of Troyes, when she bought a number of enormous emeralds for a girdle and of smaller and finer emeralds for a necklace, to present to her daughter, the Duchess of Lorraine. She bought most of these stones from the Rhinegrave, who had been in command of the royal German mercenaries during the war with the Huguenots. A sardonic touch is added to the gift by the fact that the Spanish Ambassador wrote to his master that he had heard the Rhinegrave say to the Count of Mansfeld (later commander of the German mercenaries of the Huguenot

[1] A. N. K. 1501 (42).

army) that he had got these emeralds from churches during the war. Catherine must have known that the jewels were loot and she had to shut her eyes not to see that many of them must have been either stolen directly from the orthodox churches, or bought from those who had stolen them, by one of the commanders hired by the King to protect the Church. Certainly she knew perfectly well the danger of ecclesiastical peculation in war time, because writing of the permission given to the churches of lower Normandy to raise a force of harquebusiers by selling their altar ornaments, she said, "Care ought to be taken lest the clergy to get one crown to pay the troops, sell a far greater value of plate and jewels to put the money in their pockets." [1]

There were many instances of thus "stripping the altars of God to clothe the ladies of the court" and if among the defenders of Catholicism men were thus openly allowed to make profit out of sacrilege, it was easy for Huguenot captains of guerilla war to persuade themselves that plunder of the apparatus of the mass (which they thought idolatrous) was almost a religious duty. A list of the booty [2] of the famous Huguenot partisan nicknamed The Devil of Bressault, made in the cathedral of Le Mans, contains ninety-two splendid garments, a tunic of cloth of gold over crimson velvet, chasubles, violet velvet over cloth of gold, of black, green and red velvet, of green, white and red embroidered damask, capes of crimson, embroidered black or white damask, etc. Many of these splendid fabrics found their way into costumes as the stolen emeralds found their way to the neck of Catherine's oldest daughter.

The most persistent of Catherine's extravagant tastes was building. In the beginning of the year 1564, the very worst time of all these troubles, Catherine, not content with the nine magnificent châteaux and palaces built a short time before by Francis I, demolished the palace of Les Tournelles, laid out on the banks of the Seine a magnificent

[1] A. N. K. 1501 f. 74; Letts. I, 316.
[2] Joubert App. 2.

garden and began the construction of the palace of the Tuileries which was to be joined to the royal castle of the Louvre by a splendid gallery. In forming these plans Catherine was influenced, not only by that love of building which had been so marked among the members of her own family and the members of the family into which she had married, but probably also by her affection for her husband. The palace she demolished had been the palace in which he died; the palace to which she began the adjunct and companion had been enlarged and adorned with splendid windows and halls by him. The outside of it was ornamented with those interlaced C's and H's which formed the official monogram of the King and his wife. She had continued the plan of her husband to complete the great quadrangle according to the design of the architect Pierre Lescot who had worked upon the building under her father-in-law and her husband. Catherine now wished, not only to continue the work of her husband, but to build on a very magnificent scale a new palace alongside of the Louvre. She was granted a hundred thousand livres from the state treasury to begin it and not long afterwards a hundred and fifty thousand more. The garden which was a part of this plan, Catherine finished in about six years. But some seven or eight years after she began the palace, she stopped work on the building, perhaps because she was alarmed by certain predictions of the astrologers in connection with it. How far she actually built on the plans before she stopped we cannot be quite certain. We know that from time to time she had fine marbles sent from different places to use in the building. It was because she had stopped work on the Tuileries years before that, at her death, there were in the gardens five splendid marble columns and a quantity of marbles cut and in block of a variety of colors, red, black, green and red, white and black, grey-white, red and gray, white blotched with yellow, white and red, etc., etc.[1]

[1] Battifol 111. Lenormant qtd. Topographie, 228, see Note. Du Cerceau ctd. Berty, I, 249; Berty, II, 8; I, 258, e.g. Letts. II, 264; III, 1. Bonnaffé, 213.

Balked in her attempt to secure the promise of an interview with Philip and her daughter, Catherine turned to another plan. She determined to take the King on a circular journey through the provinces of France, hoping that during the course of it she would be able to persuade her son-in-law to meet her on the southern border. Even if she could not do this, she hoped that the visit of the King would pacify many local troubles.

But before she started Catherine thought it good policy to rally a large part of the nobility around the Court and she did this by indulging her taste for splendor in a magnificent series of fêtes at Fontainebleau. The Constable opened the series by a great supper. The next day the Cardinal of Bourbon gave another great supper. Two days later the Queen entertained at dinner, followed by a comedy played in the great ballroom of the château. The King's younger brother then gave a dinner followed by a tournament where twelve gentlemen fought on foot with javelins and swords. Then the King followed with a great fête and masked tournament in which a castle, defended by devils commanded by giants, was assaulted by the four marshals of France on horseback, leading a troop made up of the young gentlemen of the court. Many lances were broken and armor rang with the blows of the sword, but the death of Henry II seems to have had a permanent effect in repressing the roughness of the game of the tournament as played in the court of France. A feature of these splendid festivals of Catherine was the brilliant body of her young women-in-waiting, usually from the noble families of France, though some were Italian and at least one was Greek. All were, if we can believe the somewhat dithyrambic statements of that veteran gallant, Brantôme, beautiful. He gives a list of sixty young unmarried women whom he remembers at the court of Catherine. The pleasure of the old man's recollection is so intense as to be almost pathetic, when he paints the brilliant spectacle of the Queen riding abroad followed by forty or fifty of these

women, mounted on beautiful hackneys richly caparisoned, which they sat with the utmost grace, "the plumes of their hats floating in the air with a provoking challenge as if to war or love." [1]

In connection with the brilliant band an accusation has been brought against Catherine of a certain devilish picturesqueness which has caused it to be accepted, without much examination, as a part of the popular conception of her life. It is, however, an accusation for which it is easier to find support among her enemies than in unprejudiced testimony from her contemporaries. It is hardly wise to give over much weight to the leering anecdotes of Brantôme, an old debauchee with a corrupted memory, or the putrid satires collected by a moralist like de l'Estoile, who is too much inclined to roll the evils he records like a sweet morsel under his tongue. The opinion of Calvin, expressed in a letter of the spring of 1561, that Navarre was "entirely given over to Venus" and the Queen Mother "trained in those arts," was exciting his passion by means of "her seraglio," is more worthy of attention, though it refers to only one instance and is highly prejudiced against Catherine. The similar opinion of the Spanish Ambassador that Catherine was deliberately using one of her maids-in-waiting to worm secrets from the King of Navarre and separate him from the party of the Catholics must be weighed against his other statement, entirely false, that the Huguenots habitually used beautiful young women to draw young noblemen to heresy. Later in life Sully recorded in his memoirs his belief that Catherine had deliberately used her maids-of-honor, without regard to the consequences to them, in order to seduce her opponents. But on the whole it is very astonishing to find how little direct evidence there is to support the accusation which has been repeated by historians of every generation from the time of Catherine's death until now. We know that at least four of Catherine's

[1] Jouan. Castelnau, Bk. V, Ch. 6; Letts. X, gives list of 280 court ladies, Brant., VII, 399.

maids-of-honor bore children to great lords of the realm, but one of these liaisons was distinctly contrary to her political interests and it is not at all certain that she knew of the beginnings of the others; still less that she encouraged them. That adultery was more or less common at the French court after the reigns of two kings who had set such examples as Francis I and Henry II, is highly probable and attested by contemporary opinion. Montaigne, who does not conceal his own licentiousness, expresses a very strong judgment on the growing licentiousness of his generation. There is not the smallest reason to believe that Catherine, although her own conduct in that respect is irreproachable, would have cared to make any strong stand against a depraved moral atmosphere, nor would her conscience have been in the least troubled by taking any profit that might come to her plans from it. But the charge that she deliberately and systematically corrupted the morals of young people around her in order to make them the tools of her politics, can be dismissed as an invention of her enemies. She dearly loved a joke and one of the commonest phrases in the reports of ambassadors is "the Queen Mother laughed heartily," but there is no record of any *double entendre* from her lips. Indeed, she seems to have been a pronounced foe of that "filthy jesting" which was taken for granted in Renascence society. The poet Baif records that, when she commissioned him to translate some comedies of Terence to be played at court, she ordered him to suppress indecencies in the dialogue. And Brantôme remembered that any courtier who did not behave with the most extreme propriety was punished by prompt exclusion from the soirées in Catherine's apartments.[1]

The best way of suggesting a specimen of the reasons for this somewhat vague judgment in regard to a definite indictment unsupported by definite evidence, is to be found in the story of one of Catherine's maids-in-waiting whose

[1] Baum, App. 32; Condé, II, 43; Sully, 20, 27, 28, 34, 35, 36, 58; Frémy (1), ctd. 90.

dishonor became evident about this time. Isabelle de Limeuil was a very distant relative of Catherine's mother, a beautiful blonde with blue eyes, a high complexion and a vivacious wit,[1] of whom Ronsard in one of his most graceful poems sang that he would like to give her as many kisses as there were leaves on the trees of the forest. Robertet, one of Catherine's secretaries, was her devoted admirer. Soon after the Peace of Amboise the Prince of Condé fell a victim to her charms. Some of his friends in vain wrote to warn him of the danger to his reputation and authority, but Condé, who was now rather openly courted by the beautiful and enormously wealthy widow of the Marshal Saint André (who had fallen in the battle of Dreux), refused their advice to leave court. Two months after Catherine began her journey through the provinces, Isabelle was suddenly seized with the pains of childbirth in the midst of a court reception and gave birth to a son in a neighboring room. Whatever Catherine's attitude toward moral delinquency may have been, we know from her letter to the King of Navarre already cited, from the regulations she imposed upon the life of her court and her actions in a previous similar case among her maids-of-honor, that any conduct that openly contravened "les convenances" would receive her sternest reprobation. In this case, her action against the fragile and reckless beauty was probably sharpened by the fact that one of the courtiers now accused Isabelle of having a short time before tried to induce him to poison the Prince of La Roche-sur-Yon because he had insulted her. He added that she had even hinted at poisoning Catherine herself. Isabelle was at once carried off and confined in a convent at Auxonne. Her lover, the Queen's secretary, soon discovered where she was and found means to write to her recalling their happiness of the previous year. He says that he did not dare to come to see her for fear of the anger of the Queen Mother and added that he was also afraid of the jealousy of the Prince of Condé. He

[1] Brantôme.

said he was "willing to die for her because he loved her more than anything else in the world. Bourdeille and Guitinière [two of her companions in the Queen's household] send you a thousand kisses. Burn this letter: you know why." The imprisoned girl replied that she could not "find words to tell what pleasure his letter had brought her; that she did nothing all day long except think of him because nothing in the world could make her forget to love him."

Soon after, Condé, who was kept at the bedside of his wife, dying of consumption, found means to write to her, saying that he had heard of her through Robertet. He says he does not "believe what he has been told that the child was not really his and that it is a beautiful boy whom he is having brought up as befits a young prince." He sends her a rather curious proof of constant affection in the shape of one of his night-gowns and asks her to continue to love him faithfully; reminding her at the same time that he is "accustomed in all things to be the only one and the first one." A few weeks later Condé's wife died and not long after Condé wanted to marry either the widow of the Duke of Guise or Mary, Queen of Scots, offering to change his religion or do whatever else was necessary to make the match agreeable. Apparently they were playing with him to break up the Huguenot party, for, in the end, Condé was furious over the outcome of the negotiation, saying the Cardinal of Lorraine had cheated him with hopes of marriage to the Queen of Scots.[1]

The accusation that Isabelle had planned to use poison was not taken very seriously by anyone and about a year after her arrest Condé had one of his gentlemen arrange for her escape from confinement and transfer to the magnificent château of Valery, which had just been presented to him by the Marechâle de St. André. The Protestant ministers sent a deputation to wait upon him and to remonstrate with regard to the scandal, but he dismissed them

[1] Labanoff, I, 245, B. N. fds. fr. ctd. de la Ferrière (2), 115 A. N. K. 1503 f. 36.

brusquely. He soon got tired of Isabelle and before the end of the year he yielded to the suggestions of his friends and married a Huguenotte, the beautiful daughter of the Marquis of Rothelin. Catherine, who was secretly much relieved that the proposed alliance between Condé and the house of Guise had not been accomplished in any of the forms in which it had been suggested, gave her consent to the marriage. Not long after Isabelle married Scipion Sardini, an Italian banker settled in France, a great favorite of Catherine, who had become enormously wealthy, chiefly through his dealings with the Crown. She presided for many years over his magnificent hotel in Paris. Curiously enough her younger sister married, not long after, the very courtier who had accused Isabelle of a desire to distribute poison in the French court. In such an atmosphere the evil influence of woman's beauty did not need to be patronized by the head of the state.[1]

Catherine took a certain number of this band of beauties with her on the long royal progress through France. In explaining the objects of this journey she naturally emphasized different things to different people. To Admiral Coligny she wrote in April, 1564: "Although they were sending expressly every day to those who have in hand the administration of justice, it must be confessed that the greater part of them have not, in most places, paid very much attention to their duty; which is the reason why the King undertakes this journey in order to make everybody so clearly understand his intention to enforce this Edict (of Pacification) that nobody can be able to allege any pretext nor occasion to break it." Archives in Switzerland contain documentary proofs of the acceptance by Coligny and his brother of Catherine's intention to maintain the toleration promised by the Edict. In the summer of 1564 the epoch for the renewal of the alliance between the crown of France and the cantons of the Swiss League had arrived

[1] Cal. F. 1565, p. 331; d'Aumale, I, 219, de la Ferrière (2).

and French envoys were sent to arrange it. The councillors of the Protestant cantons of Berne, Basle and Zurich refused to sign the alliance unless it was expressly stipulated in writing that a failure of the King to maintain toleration would leave them free to withdraw. Coligny and d'Andelot wrote strongly urging them not to insist on this which "would do more harm than good." Coligny begged them "in the name of God" to accept the verbal assurances of the King that he would maintain the toleration promised by the Edict. The matter was finally settled by a separate formal acknowledgment from the French envoys of the declaration of the council of Berne that they were not bound by the alliance if "those who are of the evangelic profession of faith were molested or persecuted against the Edict." This is an example of Catherine's frequent use during the four and a half years' peace which followed the Edict of Amboise, of the advice and help of Coligny.[1]

Catherine explained the motives of the royal journey to the King of Spain in terms quite different from those she used to Coligny. She told him she was taking the King through his kingdom because she had heard from all quarters that the Huguenots were spreading the report that she and the King proposed to join their religion. She had therefore determined to take the King on a long voyage through his kingdom "to prove to all parts of the kingdom that she and her children were faithful to their religion. This is the reason why wherever she has gone she has always heard mass in the most solemn and public manner." Whichever of these intentions was uppermost in her mind —and Catherine was in the habit of working for two apparently opposed ends simultaneously, or at least alternately—she was not very successful in securing the enforcement of the Edict about religion. The complaints which had been so common before she started continued to come in from both sides. The Edict was in many places openly

[1] Letts. II, 1, 77; Arch. Zurich, 13 Aug., 4 Nov., 1564; Arch. Basle. Fr. A. 2, 8, 31 Oct., 1564, Jan. 3, 1565.

broken and not enforced by the magistrates. Catherine promised redress for outrages and ordered the severe enforcement of the law, but the problem was a very difficult one and the extreme men of both sides were unwilling to keep within the strict terms of the Edict wherever they had the power to encroach upon it.[1]

In the matter of proving her orthodoxy Catherine met with more success. Besides the zeal she showed everywhere in attending Roman Catholic worship, she issued an order suspending the operations of the Edict in any place where the court was. When the Duchess of Ferrara and the Queen of Navarre assumed that they were an exception to this rule, she told them that, if they had preaching in their rooms while they were in her suite, she would hang the preachers if she could lay her hands on them. In August, 1564, she issued the Edict of Roussillon as a supplementary explanation of the Edict of Amboise. It explained that the right to worship in their châteaux given to gentlemen was meant to apply only to their vassals and their households. The churches were forbidden to hold synods or to raise a general fund. Monks and nuns who had married during the war were ordered to put away their husbands or wives or to leave the kingdom within two months, on the pain of the gallows for the men and perpetual imprisonment for the women. A little later the royal council ordered that no man of the new religion should be appointed a judge and the Queen told the Nuncio they had wanted to apply the same rule to all the offices of the kingdom, "but it had been thought by the King that this might cause the Huguenots to revolt." The Prince of Condé immediately sent to Catherine letters of formal protest. Catherine, after glancing through them and recognizing their ability, said with a smile to the messenger, "Where was the Admiral when these letters of the Prince of Condé were written?" But this policy of

[1] Monluc, V, 24.

impressing Spain by a public demonstration of zeal for orthodoxy gained its end, for at the close of 1564 the royal council at Madrid voted that an interview should be arranged at Bayonne between Catherine and her daughter, the Queen of Spain.[1]

Just at this time, when the discontent of the Huguenots was reaching its highest pitch, an incident occurred (8 Jan., 1565) which showed they might have support outside their own ranks in any renewal of the conflict between them and the ultra-orthodox party led by the House of Lorraine. When Catherine started on her journey, she had given Marshal Montmorency, the eldest son of the Constable, Governor of Paris, strict orders, renewed by letters at intervals, to maintain the peace at all hazards. When she heard in the end of December of some mysterious movement of noblemen in the northern part of France, she sent him renewed orders to allow no one to enter the city of Paris followed by armed attendants. Soon after the Cardinal of Lorraine came through the gates followed by fifty musketeers, in spite of the fact that the Marshal sent him orders not to do so. The police attempted to stop him, but were obliged to come back to the Marshal and report that they were not strong enough. Whereupon Montmorency went out, followed by his friends and servitors, and met the Cardinal in the street. Shots were fired on both sides; a gentleman of the party of Montmorency and one of the servitors of the Cardinal were killed; the train was partly disarmed and dispersed and the Cardinal was compelled to take refuge in a shop. He complained bitterly to the King and cited the Queen's permission to have a guard of fifty arquebusiers. Montmorency replied that if that was the case he ought to have sent him word and quoted the express orders of the King and Queen to allow no arms to be brought into Paris. The

[1] A. N. K. 1501 f. 50; ib. 1502 qtd. Marcks, 101; Fontanon, IV, 279; Arch. C. VI, 167, A. N. K. 1505 f. 25.

King was pleased with Montmorency's conduct and told him so in a letter.[1]

The affair made an enormous sensation not only in France but throughout Europe. The Constable showed the Queen a letter from the Admiral which said, "I have not hesitated to send to Marshal Montmorency, my cousin, offering him all my forces." This was no idle offer. The Admiral gathered his adherents and started for Paris, but, finding the trouble over, retired; for which the King wrote to thank him.[2]

Catherine tried to suppress the quarrel as she always tried to compose all quarrels. Ultimately the Marshals Vielleville and Bourdillon were appointed a court of honor to sit upon the case. They advised the King to write to the Cardinal "that he was sure Montmorency had not intended any personal offense, but only to carry out the King's orders and therefore he desired that they should remain good friends." In the middle of the spring the King sent the strictest orders to allow none of the chief men of either faction to enter Paris. For he had good reason to be afraid that the civil war was about to begin again, not directly because of religion, but because of the old quarrel between the Montmorencys and the Guise. In the early spring Montmorency and the Châtillons secured an intercepted letter written by d'Aumale, a younger brother of the late Duke of Guise, to his brother, the Marquis of Elbeuf, saying lies were being told about them in court by the Admiral and the Marshal. They were getting from Catherine "the most beautiful words in the world of the kind which you know she is accustomed to give," but the best thing to do was to bind together all the gentlemen of their faction, "our good friends into a secret association for self-defense and against the Admiral and the Marshal." The Guises said they never wrote the letter, but there is

[1] E.g. B. N. fds. fr. 3204 Granvelle (1) VIII, 600 B. N. fds. fr. 3188 f. 6 ib. 3204.

[2] B. N. It. 1724 f. 249; ib. 1725 f. 66, fds. fr. 6627 f. 44.

no particular reason to believe that it was a forgery. At all events Catherine acted as if she thought it was genuine, because the royal council drew up the formula of an oath entering a royal league and renouncing all other associations, which was sent through the kingdom to be signed by all the gentlemen of France.[1]

[1] B. N. fds. fr. 3194, 3243, 3950; f. 60 f. 49. B. N. It. 1725 f. 82 Béthune, 8686 f. 31 ib. 8717 f. 29, Marcks, 142 n. Condé, V, 274; B. N. It. 1725 f. 82.

CHAPTER XIX

THE INTERVIEW OF BAYONNE AND THE COUNCIL OF TRENT

The journey on which Catherine started in the early spring of 1564 occupied twenty-six months and covered nearly three thousand miles on horseback or by barges on the rivers. It led her from the apple orchards of Normandy to the vineyards of Burgundy and then through the orange groves of Provence and the swamps of the Mediterranean haunted by great flocks of flamingoes, to the clear cold fountains of Angoulême, whose outlet is "entirely covered with swans, bordered with crayfish, and paved with trout." Thence they went on past the ninety miles of the salt marshes of Marennes, through the prairies of Nantes, back to the fertile basin of the Loire; whence they started south again through the huge flocks of long fleeced sheep in the mountains of Auvergne, down into the very centre of France in the volcanic hills of Puy de Dome, from whose rocky ravines terrible storms of thunder and hail sweep down upon the fertile wheat fields below; then north again by a different route across the rich basin of the Seine to Paris.[1]

Catherine bore the fatigues of the journey well and in spite of the discomfort, it must have been a pleasure to her, for she loved to meet people, to exercise power and to handle delicate situations. On the whole it is hard to see how she could have done better than she did in managing tactfully the furious factions who, everywhere, told her exactly opposite stories about the wrongs they suffered from the other side. The lords at whose châteaux they stopped, the cities little and big and even the villages, rivalled each other in

[1] Jouan, 12, 14, 17, 29, 30, 33, 37, 38, 39. Vidal.

showing the best hospitality they could to their young King. The party were probably rather tired of seeing country dances of the various provinces danced by the most beautiful young girls of the neighborhood. Frequently the King and his mother were asked to hold the child of a nobleman at the baptismal font and, if it was a girl, they always gave it their two names joined: Charlotte-Catherine.[1]

In the great city of Lyons, however, their pleasure was destroyed by a terrible calamity from which they were obliged to flee. The plague broke out with fearful virulence. The English Ambassador writing from the place where the court had taken refuge, said, "The dead are lying in the streets all day long and at night they are cast into the river because the people can not dig graves. The servants who went into the city to get food, told me that they had seen a man lying groaning in the street all day long with no one to take care of him. Almost as many were dying of hunger and lack of care as of the plague." [2]

The apex of the whole journey to Catherine was the interview with her daughter, the Queen of Spain, which took place in the city of Bayonne where Elizabeth stayed seventeen days. On the banks of the river which separated France from Spain, Catherine had erected a beautiful pavilion in which there was spread "a very rich luncheon of fine hams and tongues, pastries, all sorts of fruits, salads, sweetmeats, and a great abundance of good wine." The Queen of Spain came down to the river bank accompanied by three hundred mounted archers of the royal Spanish guard. While the French soldiers on the other bank fired repeated salvoes, she embarked and met the royal French barge in the middle of the river, where the King embraced her and took her on to his boat. They spent an hour at luncheon while drums, trumpets and hautboys sounded in loud melody from all sides. Then the King gave his sister

[1] Jouan.
[2] Cal. F. 1564, p. 175.

a beautiful white hackney on which she put a splendid caparison worth four hundred thousand ducats, which had been her husband's wedding gift and made her entry into the city of Bayonne by torchlight.

A few days later Catherine gave a great picnic on an island in the river whose center was a beautiful grassy meadow surrounded by lofty woods. In niches formed in these woods were placed round tables each for a dozen persons. The royal table, at the head of this stately open-air dining salon, was raised on a bank of turf. The tables were served by groups of court ladies dressed as "peasant girls in satin and cloth of gold according to the costumes of the various provinces of France." When the boats of the guests reached the isle from Bayonne, "after a voyage accompanied by continuous music from several marine gods singing and reciting verses around the royal barge," the shepherdesses received them, "each troup dancing according to the custom of its province, the Poitevines with the bagpipes, the Provençales dancing la Volte with the cymbals, the Burgundians and Champagnoises with the little oboe, violins and rustic tambourines, the Bretonnes dancing their passe-pieds and branles-gais, etc. When the feast was over a huge luminous rock rolled into the center out of which came a group of satyrs playing instruments. After them descended a band of nymphs whose beauty and whose jewels dimmed the lights. They began a beautiful ballet, but envious fortune, unable to bear its glory, sent such a terrible rainstorm that the confusion of the night retreat by boat gave the next morning as many good stories to laugh at as the festival had given thrills of pleasure." A few days later there was a magnificent tournament fought on either side by champions commanded respectively by the King and his brother. The companies entered the lists in triumphal chariots drawn by four beautiful white hackneys. One chariot was crowned by the figure of Venus and covered with cloth of gold. The other was crowned by the figure of Cupid and covered with cloth of silver. The tourna-

ment lasted for three hours and was followed by a display of fireworks.[1]

These continuous festivals, among the most costly ever given by the splendor-loving Catherine, were meant to conceal the real object of the meeting, which was a matter of grave suspicion to the Huguenot party in France and to all Protestants throughout the world. Philip's fear of arousing by an interview dangerous Protestant suspicion was fully justified by the event and some modern historians have called Catherine's persistence in arranging this interview the most shortsighted thing in the diplomacy of her entire life. After the meeting was over, it continued to be regarded as sinister by all dissidents from the ancient church, and seven years later they concluded that their suspicion had been justified by the night of St. Bartholomew. Many historians have accepted this conclusion, but it was wrong, for we know by documents not accessible until recent years that St. Bartholomew was not planned at Bayonne. We must be a little less positive in regard to the details of what did take place there, but it is plain enough what Catherine tried to get and what Philip did get from her. She did not want to yield to her son-in-law, but she hoped to become very much better friends with him. It was not unnatural for her to feel that a personal interview would very much help this, when she remembered the interviews which Francis I had held with Henry VIII and Charles V, and she wrote there were things she could only say to the King of Spain himself. In addition she was not insensible to the effect upon the world of the spectacle of the greatest King and Queen in Christendom coming together to meet their mother, "the merchant's daughter." Above all she hoped finally to arrange the best possible marriages for her children.[2]

Philip would not come and therefore we have very full reports of his representative, the Duke of Alva. Philip had

[1] Jouan, Margaret.
[2] Letts. X 123; A. N. K. 1501 f. 29, Granvelle (1) IX, 314, 517.

insisted that if Catherine brought any Huguenots in her train, he would not permit his wife to cross the river to see her mother. The leader of the Catholics, the Cardinal of Lorraine, was absent at the Council of Trent and the people of importance whom Alva considered "dependable for the cause the King desires to promote" were the Constable, the Cardinal of Bourbon (both of whom he regards as orthodox but unwilling to take the initiative). More energetic partisans were the Cardinal of Guise, Damville, the Duke of Montpensier and Monluc. The Cardinal of Guise told him that three or four unhappy people were the only cause of the trouble in the realm and that it was deplorable to see some willing to support them in their evil simply because they were related to them by blood. Damville, the Constable's second son, said, "If he were cut in pieces and his breast were opened, the name of Philip would be found engraved on his heart." "As far as Monluc is concerned," Alva writes, "knowing the great vanity of that person, I determined to take hold of him on his weak side. . . . I said, 'Sir, this whole assembly of princes and princesses and great personages is entirely your work, because it was your report advocating this interview which induced the King of Spain to agree to it.' . . . As he listened to my words he was seized by a most terrible fit of vanity and laid his whole heart open to me." He promised to write out his opinion, which Alva forwarded.[1]

Monluc's memoir estimated that in Champagne, Burgundy, Lyonnais, Auvergne, Provence, Languedoc and the larger part of Guienne, the orthodox party were the stronger. Dauphiny, Xaintonge, and the greater part of Poitou were badly infected, but in Anjou and Touraine, from Orleans to Paris, orthodoxy prevailed and no other part of the kingdom was affected except a part of Picardy and Normandy. Summing it all up, he believed that five-sixths of the kingdom was held by the orthodox. The whole matter could be settled by an edict that any man who does

[1] Granvelle (1), pntd. IX, 281; A. N. K. 1503 f. 15.

not wish to live in the King's religion, must leave France within a month, with permission to sell his estates, and he assured Philip that this is really what the Queen Mother wants to do and intends to do. It is hard to avoid the conclusion that, just as Alva had fooled Monluc through his terrible vanity, so the Queen was making a tool of the old soldier to persuade Philip that this was what she meant to do and so get an agreement to her real object in holding the conference. As a matter of fact Catherine did not intend at this time to do anything of the sort, unless she was absolutely obliged to do it. The Duke of Montpensier suggested in the name of the nobles named by Alva, that heretic ministers should be given a month to leave the country and heretic services forbidden, that the decisions of the Council of Trent should be immediately published and enforced, and that no man whose orthodoxy was suspected should be allowed to hold an office or even be received at court. The messenger who brought this opinion said to the Spanish Ambassador that it contained only the minimum of what was necessary to be done, and that it would be better and simpler to cut off the heads of Condé, the Admiral, d'Andelot, La Rochefoucauld, and Grammont. The Duke of Alva thought the little knot of nobles headed by Montpensier were looking entirely to the King of Spain and as loyal to him as if they were his own subjects.[1]

But when he began to approach the King and Queen he found things entirely different. When he told the King that he was chosen of God to put his hand to a great work of chastisement, the King answered, "No; taking up arms is not to be thought of. I don't want to destroy my kingdom as they had begun to do in the last war." He then determined to force the Queen Mother to declare herself. In the conversation, at which only the Queen of Spain was present, Alva thought that Catherine "displayed in her manner of handling the subject more tact and skill than I

[1] Monluc, V, 23; Letts. II, pntd. Int. 73 Comp. Marcks, 186. A. N. K. 1503 f. 18.

have ever found in any person under any circumstances." Alva said that the two kingdoms were equally concerned in this matter because the infection of France would undoubtedly spread to Spain, so that his master thought his crown and perhaps his life was involved in this danger. The only thing his master cared to negotiate about was driving out of France that evil sect. Catherine was "exceedingly cold about religion and really attentive to nothing except the matter of the marriages of her children. She kept saying that to help the troubles of religion there is nothing better than to unite the two crowns and the two houses by new bonds." As, for instance, by marrying Catherine's youngest daughter, Margaret, to the heir of the Spanish throne and her second son, the Duke of Orleans, to the Princess of Portugal, to whom the King of Spain might present a state in order that the young couple might set up as King and Queen. So the fencing went on; Alva insisting on the extermination of heresy in France, Catherine upon the marriages of her children, and neither agreeing to anything the other wanted.[1]

Catherine did not mean, however, to go away without some visible result and when the interview was formally over, she played her last card. Marshal Bourdillon, who had the name of being a moderate, was sent to tell Alva quietly that Catherine had said that if the King of Spain would make the marriage for her second son and give him a state as a marriage portion, she would arrange to fix all the difficulties about religion. Alva made no comment on this offer except to write in his last letter that it would be time enough to talk about those marriages when something has really been done in France to suppress heresy. Then, believing that everything was lost "unless God helps," he prepared to leave Bayonne in great discontent.

But when the conference was closed, Catherine, as she often did in her letters, put the most important thing into

[1] Granvelle (1) IX, 307; A. N. K. 1503 f. 36, ib. 1508 f. 38.

a postscript. She crossed the border with her daughter and went with her a little bit into Spain.

The Spanish Ambassador wrote to Philip: "At St. Jean de Luz the tears of Her Majesty's mother and brothers began to flow and certainly they were many. The Constable finally went into the King's room and told him he ought not to cry for it would be much noticed by strangers and his vassals, because tears were very unbecoming to the eyes of a King." Weeping was suspended long enough to hold a last conference in the presence of the Guise, the Bourbons, the Constable and the Duke of Montpensier. The Ambassador wrote of it: "If the agreement which the Duke of Alva will tell your Majesty was made here, is carried out, it is all that can be desired for the service of God and Your Majesty." [1]

What was this agreement? Was it only "to take all arms out of the hands of the Huguenots?" Was it to seize and execute or imprison their chiefs? Or was it, as was afterwards believed, the plan for their treacherous extermination which was attempted seven years later at St. Bartholomew? A study of the Spanish dispatches makes the answer to these questions as certain as our knowledge can be about anything of which we have no direct record.

The first means of telling what was agreed upon in that conference is that we know precisely what the two points were which the Duke of Alva had been trying to get from Catherine. First, that the kingdom of France should accept and put in force the decrees of the Council of Trent which had just closed its session and second, that the King should take measures for "the punishment of the rebels and those astray in the matter of religion." We know also that up to the very end of the formal conferences the Duke was very much disgusted because Catherine would pay no attention to these demands and did not seem to care for anything except the marriages of her children. So, even if we had no other evidence, it would be fair to conclude that, when

[1] Granvelle (1) IX, 30; Letts. II, 297. A. N. K. 1503 f. 47.

he expressed himself as fully satisfied with the result of the last interview, it must have included the granting of these two points.[1] But we have other evidence. A careful study of the reports of the subsequent conversations between Catherine and the Spanish Ambassador when he complained she was breaking her promises made at Bayonne, leaves no reasonable doubt that the agreement did include these two points and makes it certain that it did not include any plot for what happened seven years later on St. Bartholomew's day.

It is evident that the Spaniards feared from the first Catherine would not keep her promises. A few days after she left Bayonne, the Ambassador reports a conversation with her. "The Queen withdrew a little from bystanders who might overhear what she said and, leaning quite close to my ear, said, 'Think me no true woman if I do not carry out all that was agreed upon with my son, but, as you said to me the other day, it is necessary that we should be exceedingly secret because already many people are very much alarmed over what may happen.' " The Ambassador adds, "Nevertheless I must say to Your Majesty that I am very much afraid of the influence upon the Queen's mind of the heretics of this court and that her zeal may be cooled by outside influences." The next month we find him reporting that Catherine is insisting upon the carrying out of the marriages as a preliminary to fulfilling the promises made in the interview, in spite of the fact that the promises were not at all conditional on the marriages.[2]

In January, 1566, five months later, the Ambassador reported again to Philip that he had blamed the Queen for allowing the Admiral to come to court and she had told him that he thought he knew her affairs better than she did herself. He replied, "You are not keeping a single one of the promises you made to my master although, now that the leading presidents of all the parlements are met together, it

[1] A. N. K. 1503 f. 38.
[2] A. N. K. 1503 f. 50, 60, 74.

would be perfectly easy to recall the pernicious tolerant edicts which have already been issued in this kingdom." The next month he reports another conversation in which he told her that the Admiral controls everything, and that she had not kept her promises and was not carrying out the "remedy agreed upon in the interview of Bayonne for the condition of religion in this kingdom." In particular she was not recalling "the pernicious edict" (Amboise). The next month he reports that "since the Queen Mother is postponing to such an unbearable extent the execution of what she had promised in regard to religion, Philip ought to write her a strong letter or else get his wife to do it." The month after that Philip wrote to his Ambassador approving his activity in urging the Queen to carry out the resolutions taken at Bayonne and says he cannot talk too freely about it to the French Ambassador at Madrid because, "as you know, he is not one of those who understand the particulars of the agreement." In reply the Ambassador said that the Cardinal of Bourbon had offered in the Queen's name a plain bargain, that, if the marriages of her children were once made, they would drive all the ministers out of France and support in the strongest way the orthodox religion. Then suddenly, at the end of June, the tone changes and the Ambassador is evidently under the impression that the Queen "had promised that within five months she would publish the canons of the Council of Trent and drive the ministers from the kingdom." But Catherine was only playing with him. The next month he reported that the Queen was again back at the old bargain, "marriages first and then 'the remedy.'" When he pointed out that "the remedy" was a distinct agreement on her part and the marriages left as a thing to be afterwards discussed "she grew very angry." [1]

It is evident from their correspondence that, from a year after Bayonne, neither Philip nor anyone in his council expected Catherine to keep the promise she

[1] A. N. K. 1503 f. 2, 19, 67, 79, 96, 102.

made at the end of the conference to do her utmost to destroy heresy by revoking the Edict of Amboise and enforcing in France the new canons of the Council of Trent. Manifestly they had never expected her to do more than this.

It is true that many years later Henry of Navarre said that at Bayonne (when he was between eleven and twelve years old) listening to a talk between Alva and Catherine, he heard Alva say, "The head of one salmon is worth the heads of a hundred frogs." But the memories of a boy of eleven years old are not apt to be accurate and one cannot help remarking in regard to a number of the reminiscences of Henry IV, that his memory after a lapse of years had the habit of taking a decidedly dramatic turn. It is very hard to prove a negative, but to one who keeps firmly in mind the difference between history and drama, a calm review of all contemporary evidence makes it so highly probable as to be practically certain, that no suggestion was made by Spain to Catherine at Bayonne of a general treacherous massacre of the entire Huguenot party. There is even more reason to believe that, if it had been made she would not then have thought for a moment of carrying it out.

The suspicions raised in the minds of the Huguenots by the interview at Bayonne made the task of preventing France from falling back into civil war even harder than it had been for Catherine. She was under constant pressure from Spain to revoke the Edict of Amboise because it granted toleration to the Huguenots. The Huguenots were continually telling her that the toleration it granted was illusory, while the extreme Catholics asserted that the Huguenots steadily transgressed the limits of the too ample liberties there granted to them. The complaints of both sides were on the whole justified. But the wrongs complained of by the Huguenots were decidedly more intolerable, for they included such things as mobs killing Huguenots on their way to their legally appointed places of wor-

ship, or the murder and mutilation by a mob of a commissary sent to a town to investigate the plundering of a Huguenot temple, or things like this told in the journal of du Maurier, son of a country gentleman of modest means: "I have often heard my mother say that, just before I was born, she several times had the greatest difficulty to save herself from being drowned like others of all ages and sexes by a great lord of the country, a persecutor of religion. He had them thrown into a river close by his house saying that he would make them drink out of his big saucer." For these wrongs the Huguenots claimed that they could seldom obtain justice and letters of protest from men like Coligny and Condé recorded an ever rising number of such murders. Just how widespread they were and whether the situation of the Huguenots was more intolerable than the horrors of civil war, is a thing which was difficult to judge at the time and impossible to decide after the lapse of generations. That a really strong monarch could have suppressed them is probable, that a woman in the situation of Catherine could have stopped them, is more doubtful. The only thing certain is that the acceptance of the advice of her son-in-law to cure the disorder of France by revoking the Edict of Amboise and entirely forbidding Reformed worship in the kingdom, would instantly have renewed the civil war.[1]

The second thing which Philip urged upon Catherine—the immediate acceptance of the canons and decrees of the Council of Trent—would have been even more difficult to carry out; for it would have been resisted not only by the Reformed church but by many Catholics. In order to understand the difficulty of this proposed action we must briefly review the position of the French Church and Catherine's relations to the Council of Trent.

The Council of Constance in the beginning of the fifteenth century had deposed the three contesting Popes

[1] La Popelinière, Bk. X, Challé qtd. I, 112; Brimont, II, 11; Œuvré 6 qtd. Mss.

and elected a new Pope by a method of election never before used. Not content with this assumption of authority, it had explicitly declared that the decision of an ecumenical council was the supreme authority in the Church. It had committed the reform of the Church in head and members to the new Pope, Martin V, and added the decree that this mandate was to be carried out in coöperation with future councils meeting at intervals of ten years. This decision in regard to periodical councils had never been followed. When protest became too insistent, Pius II in 1460 issued the bull "execrable and in early times unheard of" in which he said that the doctrine of conciliar supremacy was heretical and anathematized anyone who should dare to appeal from his decision to a council. But in spite of this prohibition, the manifest corruptions of the Church made the need of a council more and more manifest toward the end of the fifteenth century. The real cause of the death of Savonarola was his appeal to the princes of Europe to summon a council to hear his complaints against Pope Alexander VI. In the early sixteenth century, at almost the same time the University of Paris and Martin Luther demanded the summoning of an ecumenical council. When the great German schism began, the emperor Charles V, who desired to save the unity of the Empire, was so insistent in his demand for a general council that the Pope was obliged to call one in Italy in 1536. It was, however, continually adjourned and nine years later had accomplished practically nothing. Then, in 1545, under great pressure from the Emperor, the Pope finally reconvened the Council in the city of Trent, on the southern slopes of the Alps, but within the bounds of the Empire. Contrary to the wish of the Emperor the Council at once took up, not the practical reform of the Church, but the definition of doctrine and proceeded to pass certain decrees in which the divergences between the Church doctrine and the teaching of the Protestants were emphasized as much as possible. After seven years of irregular work, with long

intervals of suspension, the Council went out of session in 1552 because it was threatened by the approach of the army of the Protestant princes of Germany. It did not assemble again for ten years.

Meantime the French Crown had become very much interested in the Council as a means of bringing about the reunion of Christendom. In July, 1560, Francis II wrote to his ambassador at Madrid to urge upon Philip II the need of a general council to settle the religious troubles of the world. He wanted, however, not a resumption of the Council of Trent, but a new council held in some place accessible to all and perfectly satisfactory to the Protestants. This came out of Catherine's policy of conciliation, but the Cardinal of Lorraine also favored it, for he was quite inclined to accept some Lutheran views; more particularly in regard to the doctrine of salvation by faith. He had great confidence in his own undoubted skill as a theologian and a preacher and repeatedly declared that he held firmly to the doctrine of the Gallican Church that a general council was the supreme authority in the Church and superior to the authority of the Pope.

Catherine was very strongly in favor of calling a general council and hoped to get all the Protestant nations to send delegates to it. When as Regent she had found the Papacy recalcitrant, she prepared to summon a national council of the Gallican Church, a project which was even more repugnant to the supporters of the papal supremacy than the idea of a general council. The Pope yielded rather reluctantly to the pressure from France, Spain and Germany to summon a council to Trent. His views of its object were, however, very different from those of the Emperor and Catherine.

They wished to reunite the Church by conciliation, but within a few months of its opening the Pope wanted to form a league between France, Spain and the papacy for the extirpation of heresy, especially in France, and he proposed to suspend the sittings of the Council until that could

be accomplished. Though the Pope hardly felt able to dissolve the Council, he was not obliged to accept decrees which did not please him, because they did not vote by nations, as the Council of Constance had done. Therefore the preponderance of Italian bishops gave him about two-thirds of the votes in general sittings, nor could anything be considered by the Council unless it was brought forward by a legate. France demanded a number of reforms, many of them, like vernacular prayers and public exposition of the Scriptures, plainly intended to conciliate the Protestants. This action was deeply resented at Rome. The French Ambassador at Trent wrote Catherine in the early days of its session that he had heard from Rome that the Pope had said he was proposing so many novelties that he seemed like an ambassador for the Huguenots. He said he had not proposed anything except what the Queen had instructed him to propose and that in the most restrained words possible, "but there are here some evil spirits who, being afraid of the reformation of the Church and desiring the dissolution of the Council write continually to Rome all the lies and calumnies possible." Indeed, Lansac felt so strongly the lack of free decision in the Council that he wrote to the French Ambassador at Rome that it was a common profane saying among the ambassadors at Trent that the Holy Ghost was sent to guide the Council every week in a valise from Rome. More than twenty years afterwards when Lansac was delivering at the Estates General of Blois a magnificent eulogy on the Council of Trent and its decrees, he was much embarrassed by having the royal Advocate General, who opposed the acceptance of the decrees, read this letter.[1]

Catherine urged her reforms and wrote to Lansac that, in spite of her respect for the papal legates, she sees that "their acts differ entirely from their words." She begins "to fear the Council will be nothing but a brave show of

[1] B. N. Nouvs. Acqs. 20597, June, 1562. "The Pope is master of this Council." De Thou, III, 432; B. N. fds. fr. 6626 f. 28; de Thou, VII, 322.

blossoms without any fruit of amendment and you know how much our abuses and corruptions need severe reforms. . . . I am afraid that in the end our dissimulation will draw the anger of God on our heads and that the weight of His hand will make us seek with tears and sighs the amendment we now resist." [1]

The Pope was soon displeased also with the action of Spain, for, within a few months of the opening of the Council, Catherine received a letter from Rome informing her that "the Pope is furious at the King of Spain and it is said that he will not do anything that the King of Spain asks because he will have no dealings with the Pope nor acknowledge his bulls or answer his letters." The French commissioners, however, were urging much more sweeping reforms than the Spanish and they desired to avoid the discussion of doctrines, which might make the prospect of the reunion of Christendom more difficult. It was also an open secret that, while they were willing not to raise the abstract question of whether the Pope or the Council was supreme, they would, if the question was forced, stand by the doctrine of conciliar supremacy. Therefore the Pope was prepared, on the whole, in case of any quarrel between France and Spain, to stand by Spain.[2]

The quarrel arose when the Spanish Ambassador by previous agreement with the Legate, took, at one of the solemn assemblies of the Council, a seat entirely by himself on a chair of black velvet, placed in a position which gave him ceremonial precedence over all the other ambassadors. The French Ambassadors made so much disturbance that they nearly broke up the service in the midst of the recital of the creed. Catherine wrote about it in the greatest indignation and treasured it up as a very great insult done to her by the King of Spain and the Pope. Both Frenchmen and Spaniards continued to discuss it with the extraordinary bitterness which always, in every age, is

[1] Letts. II, 41.
[2] B. N. Nouvs., Acqs. 20597 f. 165.

apt to mark discussions of questions of precedence or prestige. Catherine also sent ambassadors to try to persuade the Council and the Pope to move the Council to some city in Germany and to persuade the Germans, the English, the Dutch, the Danes and the Swedes to send delegates to it. But her proposal scarcely got a hearing.

Thus Catherine got so little satisfaction out of the action of the Council that she sent orders (naturally in the name of the King) to the Cardinal of Lorraine, who in the year 1563 had gone to the Council and taken the lead of the French prelates, to assemble them in a separate legation and make a formal demand upon the Council to satisfy the request of France for the reformation of the Church. The terms of the orders and the method of the action were plainly meant to suggest the threat of withdrawing from the Council. The Cardinal, however, delayed acting upon these orders, which were not absolute and finally obtained permission from the Crown to go to Rome with the French bishops in order to have a conference with the Pope.

During his absence the Council proceeded to pass certain resolutions which seemed to the French royal council to use reformation as a pretext to decrease the power of the French Crown over the French Church, while leaving other abuses whose center was at Rome altogether untouched. This brought Catherine's displeasure with the Council to the highest pitch and a royal letter was sent ordering the French prelates to demand an explicit answer to the thirty-four demands made by France for the reformation of the Church and, if they failed to receive it, to leave the city of Trent and go to Venice to wait for orders. This letter said:

"The King had never expected anything from the Council except the reunion of Christendom and peace, which could not be brought about except by a very serious reformation of ecclesiastical discipline. But the fathers of the Council, after having very superficially touched on the subject of reformation, were now making every effort to destroy the rights, the liberties

and the power of princes; whereas it was no part of their authority to mingle in the civil government of states. This was a direct injury to the public peace and the King would not suffer it."

In this strained situation, the French Ambassador in the month of September, 1563, delivered a most indignant address before the Council. Du Ferrier said that Pope Pius IV was a father without affection, who, in defiance of all the form of law, had condemned his eldest son (that is to say, the very Christian King) without having heard him, taking from him the prerogative which he had always had not to grant precedence to anyone except the Emperor. While pretending to seek the unity and concord of the Church, he had, as a matter of fact, broken up a firm peace between two great powers by an unjust judgment which he had pronounced against the King during his minority. Therefore they are compelled to leave a place from which Pius IV has banished all law and where it is not possible any more to have even the shadow of liberty. "For," he asked, "has any conclusion ever been published before it has been sent to Rome to get the approval of the Pope? It is therefore," concluded the ambassador, "Pius IV alone against whom we protest. We have a profound respect for the apostolic creed and for the Holy Roman Church, but we refuse to obey Pius IV; we reject with scorn his decrees; we do not recognize him as the Vicar of Jesus Christ, as the head of the Church, as the legitimate successor of Peter and, as everything is done at Rome and nothing at Trent, we declare that everything that has been done and shall be done in this assembly should be taken as only the personal action of Pius IV, that the most Christian King will never approve of these decrees and that the Church will never regard them as the decision of a universal council. Archbishops, abbots, doctors of theology of France, the King orders you all to leave Trent, ready to return as soon as it shall please God to give to the General Council of the Catholic Church its ancient liberty and when there shall

have been restored to the very Christian King the rank which belongs to his dignity and his majesty." [1]

The Council closed on the 4th of December, 1563, leaving a large body of decrees and canons as the result of its sessions. The dogmatic canons referred chiefly to those doctrines which had been attacked or discussed by the Protestants. The decrees on discipline instituted many very salutary reforms but did not attempt a general thorough-going reform of the entire body of church law and usage.

A royal letter to the French Ambassador has a phrase which sounds like one of Catherine's, "The fathers of the Council seem to want to pass articles which will file the nails of kings and let theirs grow," and she was not at all anxious to adopt the canons and decrees of a council which had acted so little according to her wishes. Nor was there any considerable party in the kingdom which desired to adopt those decrees as they stood. The Cardinal of Lorraine indeed, although in the beginning of the Council he had acted as one of the leaders of the opposition to the papal party, had returned from Rome apparently converted to the necessity of supporting the results of the Council. But the French clergy had for many years been unshaken in their devotion to the Gallican theory of the Church, which looked upon the Pope as the Bishop of the bishops who presided over the commonwealth of Christendom in which each nation, and particularly the French Nation, had large fundamental and irreducible liberties no pope had a right to take away.[2]

For example, in the year 1560 a certain postulant for the degree of bachelor of theology had put into his thesis that "the Pope, as the monarch of the Church, had sovereign power over all temporal things as well as spiritual things and could therefore deprive of their kingdoms princes who would not submit to his decrees." The very theological

[1] De Thou, III, 455. See Latin text. French is glossed.
[2] Instructions, 158.

faculty of the Sorbonne, which had lit the fires of persecution and the Parlement of Paris which had refused to register the conciliating edict of Catherine, joined in compelling the young man to retract. The Parlement solemnly ordered the University not to permit in the future even the abstract discussion of any such thesis. The Cardinal of Lorraine himself on his first arrival at the Council of Trent had said in his harangue, "I cannot deny that I am a Frenchman educated at the University of Paris, in which it is held that the authority of the Council is above that of the Pope and those who deny it are condemned as heretics." A little later he asserted, in the presence of ten bishops, that the doctrine of conciliar supremacy was "for him a truth as certain as that the Son of God had become man." There was no university or parlement in France in which the Protestants had the controlling influence, and yet there was no parlement or university in France which would have voted to accept the decrees of Trent as they stood, because they seemed to impinge upon the prerogative of the King and to destroy some of the liberties of the Gallican Church.[1]

[1] Pasquier, II, 90; Condé, 60, 61, 67. Guillemin qtd. Sarpi, VIII, 696.

CHAPTER XX

FEUDS AND QUARRELS. HERESY IN THE NETHERLANDS. THE HATRED OF SPAIN

Before the royal progress through the provinces was ended, Catherine had attempted to gather the fruit of it in a solemn meeting for reform and reconciliation, held in the city of Moulins in December, 1565, which included all the members of the royal family, the chief nobles of France and the leading members of all the parlements of the kingdom. On the legal side the Assembly was extremely successful. The King issued the ordinance drawn up by the Chancellor de l'Hospital for the reform of the administration of justice, of which de Thou wrote forty years later, "It is now everywhere received and justice is administered according to its rules in almost all the sovereign courts and the other lower jurisdictions of the realm." A less successful attempt was made also to reform the corrupt administration of the finances.[1]

The task of administrative, legal and financial reforms Catherine seems to have left entirely to l'Hospital and his associates. She kept in her own hands the task of reconciling the quarrels between the leading families of the French nobility. It was the sort of thing for which she was best fitted, but it was terribly difficult. There were rumors before the Assembly met that the Huguenot leaders were calling upon large numbers of their friends to come to Moulins and strict rules were laid down to avoid trouble. Gentlemen were forbidden under any circumstances "to put a hand to their swords in the city." No page or lackey was to wear either sword or dagger under penalty of a whipping for the page and the estrapade for the lackey.

[1] De Thou, III, 660, 663. B. N. It. 1726 f. 109, Cal. F. 1566, p. 187.

Every house must show at night a lighted lantern and nobody could walk the streets without a light.[1]

Catherine arranged that the Admiral and Cardinal Lorraine should have rooms in the same house and told them that each was responsible for the safety of the other. This was to begin with the greatest danger; for the blood feud of the house of Guise against the Admiral was the most dangerous of all the quarrels among the French nobility. The Cardinal of Lorraine on his arrival made a speech in the royal council. He said that as a man of the Church he did not wear a sword, but he did stand for the honor of a family, which was related by blood or marriage to a great number of those present including the King and Queen themselves. If this affair was concluded without regard to the family honor, it would not remove the danger "that my brothers and my nephews, without counting those who are related to me by slighter degrees of blood, may kill the Admiral wherever they find him."

As soon as the Assembly was convened, accusations of plots to assassinate began to be handed from one side to the other. The Captain General, d'Andelot, accused the Cardinal of Lorraine of attempting to procure his murder and the Cardinal of Lorraine hotly demanded punishment for the slanderous accusation. The Duke of Aumale denied the charge of planning murder, but said to Catherine and the King, "Would to God that the Admiral and I could be locked up in a room together and let him who survives come out." Catherine found a letter on the threshold of her door threatening her with death if she did not change her policy and the Guise told her that this threat was secretly instigated by the Admiral. One of the Admiral's vassals arrested by him, accused the Admiral of having tried to hire him to kill the Queen Mother. In reply the Constable, accompanied by all his nephews, appeared before the royal council and demanded and obtained that the slanderer should be publicly broken upon the wheel. Catherine was

[1] B. N. It. 1724, ib. 1725 f. 102, 314, fds. fr. 3207 f. 5, ib. 3195.

skilful enough to arrange, in this dangerous atmosphere, stately scenes of reconciliation in the most notorious of these quarrels. The result of the pressure she brought to bear on both sides, was that the widow of the Duke of Guise gave the kiss of peace to the Admiral whom she had accused of the murder of her husband. The quarrel between the Cardinal of Lorraine and Marshal Montmorency was also closed by a formal scene of reconciliation. The Marshal expressed his very great esteem for the admirable character of the Cardinal of Lorraine and the Cardinal said that he believed the Marshal in attacking him in the streets of Paris had acted only from the very highest sense of duty.[1]

In the reconciliation with Coligny, the children and one of the brothers of the dead Duke of Guise refused to take any part and his widow carried away from it in her heart a deadly hatred. Besides these advertised hatreds there were cases of jealous animosity which kept breaking out in new quarrels. The Constable and the Duke of Nevers said bitter things of each other and Damville and the Duke of Longueville had a desperate quarrel. The Spanish Ambassador reported to Philip that the widowed Duchess of Guise and the Queen of Navarre "have blackguarded each other like two fish-wives, in the presence of the Queen Mother." It is evident that, towards the close of the royal conference, there was a state of extreme nervous tension among those at Moulins. The Duchess of Ferrara quarreled with the Queen of Navarre in open court and said, "I won't kiss as lying a mouth as yours." The Admiral and the Cardinal of Bourbon had such high words in the presence of the King and Queen, that the Admiral's brothers had to take him by the arm and lead him away, saying, "Don't quarrel with a prince of the blood," and the Prince of Condé when he heard of the scene was so infuriated with the Cardinal, his brother, that he wouldn't speak to him for a long while.[1]

[1] Cal. F. 83; B. N. It. 1726 f. 19, 24, 36; A. N. K. 1505 f. 17, 62, 76; Castelnau, VI, 2; Cal. F. 1566 f. 4, 6.

[1] A. N. K. 1508 f. 23, ib. 1505 f. 86, 107, 112 B. N. It. 1726 f. 22.

Amid all these personal animosities, the quarrel over religion and the struggle between tolerance and intolerance, found a dramatic expression in a wild scene in full council between the Cardinal of Lorraine and his former friend and adherent, Chancellor de l'Hospital. For behind all these expressions of personal and factional hatred, fear and suspicion, lay the great mass of anger and fear stored up in millions of hearts by the long conflict of opposed zeals, bringing cruel deeds, bitter words, and ever more intolerant temper. These broke out for instance in the early summer of 1566 in bloody riots in the two neighboring towns of Pamiers and Foix on the slopes of the Pyrenees. In one the Huguenots killed many Catholics and drove the rest out of the city "and the whole trouble because of a dance. At Foix the Catholics have done the same." [1]

But on the whole it seems to be true that, in spite of sporadic murder and riot, the Huguenots and Catholics were, during the latter half of the year 1566 and the first part of the year 1567, seeking a sort of *modus vivendi.* Catherine had every reason therefore to refuse the renewed and pressing advice of Philip II to stand by the agreement she made at Bayonne to withdraw the Edict of Amboise and issue another forbidding the exercise of the Reformed religion. She expressed this determination in a royal letter to the French Ambassador at Madrid in language which she doubtless expected to be repeated to the King of Spain:

"So far as concerns the agreements I have made with my subjects in regard to which they (the Spaniards) seem to be so much troubled, after I have seen the combats so many times renewed, pitched battles, cities taken by assault, all to no profit except to ruin me more and more and to make me lose every day the best of my subjects, I prefer, by the advice and counsel of my most faithful servitors, to do what I have done rather than to lose the rest of my kingdom. And God has made me so happy that, instead of the ruin which I saw threatening me

[1] Bishop of Valence qtd. d'Aumale, I, 380; Arch. C., VI, 311.

. . . I now live in repose and my kingdom is building up again more and more every day." [1]

Philip, however, had more cause than ever to urge upon Catherine a policy of repression of heresy. The fear which had so long haunted him, that flourishing heresy in France would make trouble in the richest of all his dominions, the Netherlands, was now realized. Charles V, whose inheritance from his maternal and his paternal grandfather had definitely united the Netherlands to the crown of Spain, understood the Flemings because he had been brought up among them. He had been able to accommodate himself to their temper, at once practical, fond of pleasure and proud of certain liberties. His son, Philip II, on the other hand, had been brought up in Spain and was a true Spaniard —cautious, self-restrained, careful of expense and the very incarnation of that intense national pride which saw in the Spanish people the chosen instrument of God to make true religion and real civilization dominant in the world and to do it by force of arms,—the point of view which made the Spaniard see in the soldier a personage so honorable as to be almost sacred. Philip at once began to replace the native nobility, through whom his father had to a large extent governed the Netherlands, by Spaniards. He neglected the Estates General which had been in the habit of frequently meeting. When they demanded the withdrawal of the Spanish troops who had been brought there because of the war with France, he first gave a promise to withdraw them within four months and then, eighteen months later, reluctantly summoned them home. These things made him exceedingly unpopular when he left the Netherlands for the last time in the year 1559. He made his illegitimate sister, Margaret of Parma, Governor, but she had neither the power nor the ability to allay the discontent and five years later the nobles of the royal council of the Netherlands compelled Philip to withdraw from the

[1] Letts. III, 13, note, qtd. B. N. fds. fr. 10751.

Netherlands his chief minister upon whom he had the largest reliance.

Meanwhile the new heretical opinions had been spreading rapidly, chiefly by means of Calvinist books and preachers. Ten years before his abdication, Charles V, by means of a series of edicts known as The Placards, had tried to purge the Netherlands of heresy by drastic persecution. Philip sharpened and continued his father's policy in regard to religion. He used the methods of widespread spying which were giving the inquisition of Spain so terrible a name and he excited the suspicion that he intended to introduce that institution into the Netherlands. In addition he proposed to create a new and more orthodox university and to erect new bishoprics. These measures excited discontent, not only among heretics but also among the orthodox, on the grounds that they were an interference with the privileges of the Church and the liberty of the Estates of the Netherlands and this sort of opposition was very much deepened by the proclamation by royal edict of the conclusions of the Council of Trent. These many causes of discontent finally brought into being an association amongst some of the nobles of the Netherlands whose object was an orderly protest against this policy of the government, which seemed to be an exercise of absolute power which they did not believe the King of Spain rightfully possessed in the Netherlands. Philip replied to it that he intended to come to the Netherlands himself the following spring, and meanwhile he agreed to modify his policy. When he made these concessions, he solemnly declared in secret in the presence of the Duke of Alva and two doctors of theology that his promise of pardon to all concerned in this petition was not binding upon him because it had been forced and that he proposed to punish everybody who had wronged either religion or his own sovereignty.[1]

The news of these concessions was followed, in Flanders, Holland and four other provinces of the Netherlands, by a

[1] Gossart.

very rapid increase in the number of heretical services held in the open air, and not long after there was, from one end of the Netherlands to the other, an outburst of that mob hysteria known as iconoclasm. Small bands of men, while the police and inhabitants looked on, sacked and destroyed all the ornaments of the churches. Nothing was stolen, but rich carvings, statues, pictures, tombs, baptismal fonts, all went down in ruins. Many of the nobles who had been engaged in the earlier protests against the policy of the government, were displeased not only because of the element of mob violence, but also because it made the movement seem one in favor chiefly of a change in religion.[1]

Philip had all along known that the discontent of the Netherlands was encouraged by the Huguenots. Catherine offered to issue a proclamation forbidding all Frenchmen to enter the Netherlands and calling home within fifteen days, under pain of death, all there, but the Spaniards suspected her sincerity and Granvelle wrote from Rome to Philip II, "The more the Queen Mother shows a desire to use her good offices in this matter, the less she ought to be trusted." This fear and knowledge of the influence of the Huguenots in the Netherlands was the strongest motive for Philip's constant pressure upon Catherine to suppress heresy, as he was secretly resolved to repress it, by the sword. As early as 1561 this insistence had drawn, in the voice of the infant King, these words from Catherine and the royal council, which the French Ambassador at Madrid passed on to the King of Spain: "Let no one wish to give the law to me about a thing in which I recognize no master but God: that is to say, the government of this kingdom and the management of my state." [2]

Philip was now collecting a powerful army under the command of the Duke of Alva, in order to apply to the Netherlands the policy of terror, but when he asked permission for his army to pass through France, Catherine

[1] Letts. II, 385.

[2] Granvelle (2), I, 183, 411; Letts. I, 367, 377, 611; ib. II, 382, ctd. note, 385 ctd. n.

refused to grant it. In the spring of 1566 she had received news of an event which raised her latent fear and suspicion of Philip II to a flaming anger she could not suppress.

Ever since 1562 the French Government had been making attempts to establish colonies in what is now the southern part of the United States, and the second and third expeditions in 1564 and 1565 built a fort on the coast of Florida. Under pressure of famine, the members of the second expedition had revolted against their leader, seized two ships and committed extensive piracies on the Spanish settlements in the island of Cuba. Although the leader of the expedition subsequently executed some of the mutineers, it was not, after all, very astonishing that the arrival of the third French expedition was closely followed by eight Spanish ships with orders to attack and destroy the new settlement. The risky plan of campaign of the French commander and a terrible tempest which destroyed the French fleet, gave the Spaniards a complete victory. They used it with the utmost cruelty. In spite of their promise to spare the lives of those who surrendered they hung all their prisoners or put them to the sword, except a few seamen, artisans, and pilots whom they wished to use. The French expeditions had been equipped and sent out by the Admiral Coligny with the full consent and knowledge of Catherine. His object was a double one: to extend the trade of France and to find an outlet for Huguenot colonists. The action of the Spaniards, therefore, was inspired not simply by commercial and national rivalry, but also by religious zeal and, over the scaffolds on which they hung the French prisoners, they put placards bearing this inscription, "Hung not as Frenchmen but as Lutherans."

When Catherine first heard of what she called, "this atrocious massacre done in Florida," she kept quiet about a thing "so cruel and inhuman" until the Spanish Ambassador asked audience of her. He informed her that a commander of Spain, having found in Florida some Frenchmen commissioned from the Admiral who had in their

company ministers who were engaged in planting the new religion, had chastised them as he had been commanded by the King his master. He would freely confess that he had done this a little more cruelly than his master would have desired, but after all he couldn't do less than fall upon them as pirates and people who were attacking what belongs to the King of Spain. He added that the King his master demanded justice upon the Admiral. As Charles IX was sick in bed, Catherine answered at his request. She said that as the common mother she could not help feeling an unbelievable pain at the heart to hear that so terrible a slaughter had been committed upon the subjects of her son. There was no reason for trying to cover such a deed by an allusion to the Admiral, because it might be assumed that so large a number of people had not been allowed to leave the kingdom without the knowledge of the King, who thought commerce and navigation everywhere free to his subjects. It seemed to her that there was an attempt to put a bridle in the mouth of her son, to close him up in his kingdom and to clip his wings. Thanks to God he was better obeyed than he ever was and it would not be difficult for him to make those who wished him ill know that he had no less means to defend himself than his predecessors. When the Ambassador harked back again to the Admiral and the presence of ministers of the new religion, Catherine answered that she could wish that all the Huguenots would go to that country, which "belongs to us." He was forcing her to believe that Spain did not want quiet in France. But however that may be, it was none "of their business to punish our subjects and we are not disputing whether they were or were not of the new religion, but rather talking about the murder which the Spaniards have committed upon them." [1]

Even in the midst of this undissembled anger, Catherine's ruling passion for the marriages of her children did not cease. She added to this indignant letter to her Ambas-

[1] Letts. II, 353.

sador a postscript which showed she hoped to make profit out of the situation. "I cannot help telling you that although some of the greatest marriages in Christendom are offered for the King my son, the chief regret I have is that it will be necessary in the end, because of this wrong, for him to take as a wife someone who is not of our religion; a thing we will not do except in the last extremity." Philip never gave any real heed to this indignation about the massacre in Florida. He expressed indeed some vague, formal regret, but France could never get from him any satisfaction except the release of the few survivors. What he really thought is shown by the comment he wrote on the margin of the report of the commander of the expedition: "Tell him so far as those killed are concerned, that he did well; and let those he spared be sent to the galleys." [1]

Catherine's anger was shared by nearly all Frenchmen. The Spanish Ambassador wrote a year after the massacre, "I am told by a nobleman of importance that the Queen and her counsellors are ready to weep with vexation that the King cannot get satisfaction for the great injury done him in Florida. They would sooner wreck this entire kingdom than not get vengeance for it. The Cardinal of Bourbon offers two years' income and most of the Catholics would make similar offers. Your Majesty may guess what the heretics would do." When, about two years later, a certain Dominic de Gourges, a Catholic and a Guisard, raised a small expedition containing Huguenots and Catholic volunteers, crossed the ocean, stormed the Spanish fort and hung his prisoners under a placard reading, "Done not to Spaniards nor to seamen, but to traitors, robbers and murderers," all France, Catholic and Huguenot alike, rejoiced.[2]

Catherine was not, therefore, very much disposed to allow the King of Spain to send the Duke of Alva and the Spanish troops through France on their way to the Netherlands. But she covered her own fears under other specious reasons. She pointed out that the passage of the Spanish

[1] Douais, I (2) Int. XVI.
[2] A. N. K. 1507 f. 106, Gaffarel, de Thou, Lowry, Arch. C., VI, 73.

army would arouse in those of the new religion such "fright as might light a fire hard to put out." It was impossible to have them pass secretly through the mountainous parts of France because of the lack of bridges and of provisions. To build bridges and collect provisions would take three months and give everybody warning of what was going on. While if the Duke of Alva should try to go secretly through the Kingdom without a guard of at least two hundred men, he would run great danger of being killed by the Huguenots.[1]

Catherine's correspondence makes evident that her attitude from the fall of 1566 on was one of the most anxious attention to every move of Spain. She had no intention of attacking Spain, but she did proceed to arm the kingdom for defense. She had the more reason to do this because the Emperor had just made peace with the Turks and she was afraid he would turn his attention to the recovery of Metz, Toul and Verdun conquered from the Empire and added to France by Henry II. She proceeded therefore to put in order the fortresses on the northern border, and began in October 1566 to raise two small bands of Swiss to reinforce the garrisons of Lyons and Grenoble. Six weeks later she decided to levy a body of six thousand Swiss guards. She wrote to her Ambassador in Switzerland that the King was doing this for the good of Christendom and because it was reasonable that he should attend with more surety what use may be made of the large military forces which were being prepared in so many places. But she had another reason for making this levy besides the ostensible one. She had found out that the King of Spain was endeavoring to make a levy of mercenary troops among the Swiss. France and many of the cantons of Switzerland had been bound together by a defensive alliance ever since the year 1516. This had been renewed by each succeeding King since Francis I, and the Swiss were bound to provide, whenever asked, not less than six nor more

[1] Letts. II, 408, n. 407; B. N. It. 1726 f. 110.

than sixteen thousand infantry to be paid by France. As a pledge of this "eternal peace the King of France promises to pay to each of the thirteen cantons included in it two thousand francs every year of peace." Catherine was perfectly wise in regarding this treaty as one of the corner stones of the military independence of France, and the secret attempts of Spain to break it in spirit by raising a force of picked Swiss troops, filled her with perfectly reasonable alarm. She repeatedly wrote to her ambassador to do everything in his power to check "these practices," and to use the levy by France as the best means of doing so. The Swiss, who were also disquieted by the passage of the great Spanish army along their borders, very willingly acknowledged their treaty obligations, and the Protestant canton of Zurich, which was not included in the league, and Berne, which had protested about the levy against the Huguenots in 1562, allowed its citizens to join the French force after the royal commissioners had made a written acknowledgment of their statement that the agreement was not binding if those in France "who are of the evangelic profession are molested or persecuted." [1]

Catherine was embarrassed at the beginning of her negotiations by the fact that part of the wages of the Swiss who had fought five years before in the battle of Dreux had not yet been paid. She wrote to her ambassador that she had examined the muster rolls made out just before the battle and that she does not send them (as he asks) for a guide in concluding the bargain, "because they show more men were actually in the ranks than the orders for payment show" and therefore, if she should send them, the Swiss would probably not lower their demand but rather increase it. The best thing for him to do was, after dragging out a long series of excuses about waiting for the payrolls, "to make of it *une cotte mal taillée* with them and agree to pay the smallest price you can." [2]

[1] B. N. It. 1726 f. 86, 87; Letts. III, 5, 8, 10; X, 182, 187, 188, 190, 192, 200, 207, 208, Gobat, 30, 3 Jan., 1566.

[2] Letts. X, 85.

When the rebellion in the Netherlands had subsided and Spain still persisted in sending a very large force north, the suspicion at the French court increased. There was more than one man who found it difficult to speak of these preparations in any other way except as "getting ready to come and trouble the kingdom of France." Catherine had already authorized d'Andelot, Captain General of French infantry, to fill some of his bands up to war strength, and in the end of June she summoned Condé and the other Huguenots to join a general council to decide what was to be done. Quarrels among the nobles made military preparations difficult. When d'Andelot wished to inspect the border province of Champagne, according to the duty of his rank, the Governor sent him word that he need not trouble to visit the garrisons there and a little later two of his colonels actually refused to obey his orders.[1]

The week before the meeting of the royal council, the principal Huguenot nobles and gentlemen had met at the town of Valery for the baptism of the infant of the Prince of Condé. The King was god-father, but, because the baptism was held according to the Reformed ceremony, the Admiral actually held the child at the font. There is nothing to indicate that this meeting produced among the Huguenots any talk in regard to civil war, but rather there was considerable discussion about the possibilities of a war with Spain. There was a rumor, however, at the court that the Huguenots were arming for civil war.[2]

When the royal council assembled the Huguenots in it were all for war with Spain, as the best remedy for civil discord; indeed they had urged this for some time. Condé, who at his brother's death had been promised the lieutenant-generalship of France, very much angered that this promise had not been kept, now made the suggestion that the Constable, who was advanced in years, would probably,

[1] Pntd. d'Aumale App. I, 383; Cal. F. 1567, p. 269; B. N. It. 1726 f. 27, 135.

[2] D'Aumale, pntd. App. 383.

for the good of France, be willing to resign the sword of Constable, which might then be given to him. The Constable did not agree to this suggestion and Condé left court visibly in a bad humor.[1] The King's sixteen-year-old brother, the Duke of Anjou, resented very much this ambition of Condé and made a scene which Brantôme remembered with great vividness. The Prince took Condé into a corner of the room after supper and talked to him very earnestly. What he said could not be heard, "but we could see that the young Prince was very angry, now playing with the hilt of his sword, now touching his dagger, now pulling his hat tight on and now taking it off again, and all with an angry and proud countenance." It was easy to guess what Anjou was talking about, he was telling the Prince of Condé that the supreme military command in the kingdom was to be kept for him. It is not necessary to assume, as Brantôme does, that the lad had been put up to making this angry scene by his mother. The restless and envious ambition which marked Catherine's children, appeared in them at a very early age.[2]

In spite of the fact that the Huguenots left court in such discontent, the Spanish Ambassador bitterly attacked Catherine for endangering her son's throne by favoring them and planning war against Spain. At first she cried and then she laughed. Whatever the Ambassador might say for its effect upon Catherine, we know that he had already sent word to his master that there was no danger that she would make open war against Spain because she was really unable to do so.[3]

[1] Languet, Arcana, II, 186, qtd. Gossart, I, 34; B. N. It. 1726 f. 126, 127; d'Aumale App. I, 385, 386.
[2] Brant, IV, 346.
[3] A. N. K. 1508 f. 31, ib. 30 June, 1567.

CHAPTER XXI

THE HUGUENOTS RENEW THE CIVIL WAR. THEIR ARMY

The danger was now shifted from foreign to civil war. The suspicions of the Huguenots were aroused and they began to fear that all these preparations had been made against them. The false story that a plot to kill their leaders had been made between Catherine and the King of Spain at the Conference of Bayonne, revived with new vigor, and the fact that the walls of their strong towns were being destroyed, according to agreement, during the very months when Catherine herself was building in many towns citadels to be held by royal garrisons, increased their suspicions. While murders and riots against the Huguenots seemed to have been diminishing rapidly, the list of those which had already taken place since the Edict was a formidable one, and about a dozen of the principal noblemen of the party held meetings to consider the question of renewing the civil war. At the first two of these meetings it was decided, largely by the influence of the Admiral, not to take up arms.[1]

Meanwhile warning that something was on foot came from a nobleman, Michel de Castelnau, sent on a mission to the Duke of Alva. He returned in company with some old soldiers who had once been under him and he thought their talk very suspicious. When he reported the matter to the Queen, the Constable refused to believe it and the Chancellor said he ought to be punished for arousing suspicion between the King and his subjects. But when word arrived from the south that an unusual number of gentlemen were riding through the country and traveling by post, Catherine sent for Castelnau into her own cabinet and he persuaded

[1] La Pop. XI, p. 4.

her to send one of his brothers towards the Admiral's country seat in order to find out what was going on.

A similar warning had been sent up earlier by Monluc from the south. These warnings, however, were inaccurate and based fully as much on suspicion as upon information, as the following letter of the 4th of September shows:

"To My Cousin, Monsieur de Cossé, Marechal of France:
"My Cousin:

"We have been informed that near Montargis and Châtillon (the Admiral's castle) there is the commencement of a gathering of armed forces which at the present amount to twelve or fifteen hundred horsemen. I don't believe it, although there are plenty of rumors coming in from other parts of some movement on foot for which there is no reason. But in order to get at the truth of what's going on in your part of the country I have thought it best to send you this messenger in all haste to beg you to take the trouble to find out and to tell me at once the truth."

On the 10th of September Catherine wrote again to the Marshal acknowledging his report that he had sent to the places indicated and had found nothing there. The day before the Huguenot chiefs, a dozen in number, had decided at the Admiral's château that on the 28th of September they would suddenly rise in arms in all parts of the kingdom in order to do three things: surprise some of the most important cities; seize the person of the King and his mother; attack the new Swiss guard and cut it to pieces.[1]

How little Catherine was thinking about any danger at this time is sufficiently shown by the following letter which she wrote on the 9th of September:

"Monsieur de Villeroy:

"I have been informed by the Abbé Saint Serge that the masons are working very hard on the walls and defenses of the city of Paris at the place where my garden is, just at the spot where the watercourse must pass for the fountain for which I have drawn the water from Saint Cloud. . . . I wish to write you the present letter and to ask you to have made an arch and

[1] Letts. III, 56, 57, De la Noue.

an opening, twelve feet broad, which can be locked with a key and that on the side of the arch there may be very stout walls and vaults as long as the ramparts are broad and of the height and style which the Abbé of Saint Serge will show to the workmen."

She further asks that on the other side there should be an opening direct from the river into the canals of her garden.[1]

Not long before the appointed day, indeed, Catherine received another warning which attracted her attention and she sent the Admiral's cousin to his castle at Châtillon, ostensibly to invite him to come to court, but really to find out what he was doing. He found the great chieftain dressed as a laborer and superintending the gathering of his vintage. Catherine was completely thrown off her guard and on the 18th of September she wrote to her Ambassador in Madrid, "There have been some reports, without any foundation, that those of the Reformed religion wanted to make trouble, but it is nothing but a little alarm on their part and the whole thing has now disappeared." [2]

If anything was needed to confirm the Huguenots in their resolution to rise—a resolution largely caused by fear and the desire to strike first—it was the news which reached France soon after the middle of September of the arrest of two of the chief nobles of the Netherlands, Counts Egmont and Horn. Both the treacherous way in which this arrest was carried out in the midst of festivals and mutual courtesies and the evident intention of railroading them to the scaffold, was to the Huguenot leaders a striking confirmation of their worst fears that they might be treated in the same way. Catherine told the Spanish Ambassador she meant to imitate this example, but he thought she was only trying to fool him and wrote to his master, "The Queen has shown great signs of joy over what has happened, and sent word to me that they ought to have done days ago

[1] Letts. X, 214.
[2] Pasquier, V, L. 2; d'Aubigné, III, 284. Letts. III, 58.

what the Duke had now done and that in a short time she would have things to tell me which would give me great pleasure. These words however don't arouse very much enthusiasm in me." Indeed the suspicion in the Huguenot mind that Catherine had arranged a plot against them with the aid of the Spanish army, was entirely false. The dispatches of Alva show that, far from being in league with Catherine, neither he nor his master trusted her in the least. They were always accusing her of showing too much favor to the Huguenots and the best they were disposed to hope for was that she would keep a somewhat middle position between the two parties.[1]

That this was at the moment her definite intention is plain from her correspondence and conduct. But one of the most remarkable of her many conversations which have been recorded for us—a conversation which must have taken place within a few months of this time—lets us look into the depths of her mind, below intention, almost below definite consciousness, where people keep vague future possibilities with which they play in secret moments. Giovanni Correro, one of the ablest of the Venetian Ambassadors, with whom Catherine was on very confidential terms, told the Venetian Senate how she said to him one day that

"she would think herself the most unlucky woman in the world if among all the Queens of France she was the only one to whom such troubles had come. It was a consolation to her that during the minorities of French kings the nobles had always been rebellious. On the way to Bayonne she had read at Carcassonne a manuscript history which told about the mother of St. Louis (IX), left a widow with a son eleven years old, and how the nobles had risen in arms objecting to the rule of a woman and a foreigner at that. To accomplish their ends, they had united with the Albigensian heretics, who, like those of her day, did not want priests, monks, masses, images in the churches, etc. They also called in a King of Aragon to help them and it was necessary to meet them in a pitched battle. Toulouse, their stronghold, was dismantled and finally, by the suggestion of the Queen, a peace was made conceding many of their demands. However,

[1] A. N. K. 1508 f. 60 and passim.

the King, grown strong with the lapse of time and by the counsels of his mother, finally took that vengeance on his rebels which they deserved. Then she showed how all these details matched her own situation. She was a widow and a foreigner with no one to trust and a son eleven years old. The nobles had risen under pretext of religion but really against her government, calling in the Queen of England and the Germans to help them. There was war, victory, and Orleans taken and dismantled, like Toulouse. Peace was made by her advice, to the advantage of the Huguenots. She confessed she had granted them the advantage, hoping to gain by time what she could not gain by arms without great bloodshed. At this point I said, 'Madam, Your Majesty, ought to draw consolation from these facts which are not only a picture of the events of your day but a prophecy of their final outcome (I alluded to the punishment).' She laughed very loudly (as she does whenever she hears something which pleases her) and answered: 'I should not want anybody to know I had read that chronicle for they would say that I am imitating that good lady and Queen, Blanche, who was a daughter of the King of Castile.' "[1]

So far as this remarkable betrayal of her inmost thought in an expansive moment shows any definite intention—and psychologically it would be a mistake to give it too definite form as an intent—it was a purpose whose execution was far in the future and it required for its success a long interval of conciliation and the disarming of suspicions. It seems very strange that Catherine did not see that what she was doing tended in the exactly opposite direction and was apt to arouse the Huguenots' suspicion, or that she could fail to understand how certain they would be, if they felt themselves pushed to the wall, to do precisely what they did do. The truth is that Catherine was apt to fall into the mistake of trying to play too fine a game—to use one of her own phrases, "to swim between two waters." She had tried to make Spain think that she intended to revoke the Edict of Pacification and banish heresy from France. She did not long deceive Spain, but she did deceive the Huguenots and the result of her efforts to trick Philip

[1] Rel. I, 4, p. 180.

was the second Huguenot war. This was indeed a most unfortunate result, for the indications are that the peace was gaining in stability and there was a chance that it might become permanent. This is the opinion of de la Noue, one of the bravest and the wisest of the Huguenot captains. He wrote afterwards, "Concord, good conduct and obedience to law had already made such progress among the mass of the French people, that France was entirely recovered from the waste of civil war." [1]

When the Huguenots rose in arms they failed in all three of their chief objects. The date of their rising had been fixed for the eve of St. Michel, the 28th of September, 1567. They quietly gathered a body of nobles not far from the court in order to seize the King, but on the 25th of September, Catherine took alarm and sent word for the Swiss guards, who were camped ten miles off, to join them at once. They set out at midnight and arrived the next morning at the walled city of Meaux, where the court had hastily taken refuge. After two days of hesitation, it was decided by the royal council that it was better for the King to retreat to Paris and they started out at midnight the day before the Huguenot attack had been planned. The gentlemen of the court were without armor and most of them rode, not their war horses, but hackneys. The battalion of the Swiss surrounded them in hollow square formation and the train was halfway to Paris before the first Huguenots appeared, probably not over a thousand horsemen, because they did not expect their full forces until the next day. When they threatened to charge the Swiss closed up, lowered their pikes, fell upon one knee and called on God to help them according to their usual custom and then rose to charge. The Constable, who was in command of the retreat, stopped the charge and ordered everybody to stand upon the defensive. He was pushing forward with all possible speed to pass a certain narrow ford where he feared that fifteen hundred Huguenot harquebusiers of whose ar-

[1] De la Noue, 706; Segesser, I, 449. B. N. It. 1726 f. 142.

rival in the neighborhood his spies had told him, might block his passage. The ford was passed in safety and the retreat was assured. Whenever the Swiss were threatened the square "stood like a furious wild boar pursued by the hounds." The Huguenot gentry, most of whom lacked heavy armor, could not, so long as the phalanx stood firm, ride into the mass of fifteen to eighteen foot pikes bristling rank on rank. The King and his mother arrived at Paris "tired and hungry" about four o'clock in the afternoon.[1]

The day after Catherine briefly described what had occurred in a letter to the Duke of Ferrara.

"My Cousin:

"By the letter which the King my son is writing to you presently you will hear the reason of our distress, which is of such a nature that I never could have thought that so large and unhappy a design could have entered into the minds of subjects in regard to their King. And I believe you will be no less astonished about it than we are, when you recognize that the object of the plot was the overthrow of the entire state and to put our own lives in danger. But God is a just judge and will provide for everything the remedy that pleases Him."

The King never forgot his anger over this day. More than a year later he swore to the Venetian Ambassador he would always remember how the Huguenots drove him from Meaux, nor ever again allow a single Huguenot in his household. Catherine was as much surprised as angered. She told the Venetian Ambassador "that she didn't believe anything like it has ever happened in the world before, because surely it's a most astonishing thing that a huge kingdom as great as France should have risen in one day to arms, merely on the rumor that we were in the hands of our enemies." [2]

The feeling of the Huguenots was by this time very hostile to Catherine. The more so because at the beginning

[1] Castelnau, I, 200; Segesser, I, 465; Neg. Tosc., III, 529; Pasquier, V, 2, p. 118.

[2] 29 Sept., 1567, pntd. Douais (1) King's letter to Duke of Ferrara Arch. Mod. B. N. It. 1726 f. 164, 312.

of the first trouble they had pretty good ground for believing that she would side with them. When their troops took the royal château of St. Maur they found the Queen Mother's pet dog with a litter of six puppies. Before they left the château they killed the mother and four of the puppies, which everybody interpreted as a sign they would like to kill the Queen and four of her children. The common interpretation at court was that the two they wanted to spare were the Queen of Spain and the Duchess of Lorraine.[1]

The situation was a very serious one. Although the Huguenots failed in their plans to seize several of the larger cities, they had in their hands at the end of the first week fourteen of the second importance and a large number of smaller towns. Money was very hard to get and at the end of six weeks the Huguenots had more men in the field than the King. The Constable had never been a very successful general and he was old. The other most conspicuous leaders of the previous war were dead, none of Guise's brothers were able to take his place and his son was too young. In Monluc, Catherine had a competent soldier for managing the war in a province or two, but his faults of character would have made it impossible to put him in supreme command. Tavannes was an excellent general but he said of himself that he had neither the position nor the patience to enable him to impose peace upon the jealous and warring nobles of the royal party, each of whom was anxious to get as much honor as possible.[2]

The King, although seventeen years of age, was a mere child completely under the sway of his mother. How little she or anybody else, could rely on his judgment in this great crisis, is plainly shown by the fact that he and his next oldest brother signed, at this very time, an agreement with an alchemist who claimed that he was just about to discover

[1] B. N. It. 1726 f. 167, Ven. Amb.
[2] A. N. K. 1506 f. 99; B. N. It. 1726 f. 169.

CHARLES IX, SECOND SON OF CATHERINE DE MÉDICIS

From a painting in the Louvre attributed to François Clouet

the secret of the transmutation of metals into gold and silver. The alchemist promised to give the first proof that he was on the road to this discovery in six months, the second proof four months later, and in two years the complete formula. In exchange the King and his brother promised the alchemist a hundred thousand livres of rent and a hundred thousand livres in gold, half to be paid after the first proof and half after the second. Six thousand gold crowns were to be paid him in advance and twelve hundred gold crowns a month were to be furnished during the experiments. A document of this kind would not have been so astonishing several generations back, but alchemy was now discredited in the minds of all men of intelligence. Fifty years before, Erasmus had denounced its pretensions in his "Praise of Folly," which was read by all persons of education in Europe. An example of the attitude taken toward alchemy by educated men in the middle of the sixteenth century, is afforded by a letter from the Spanish Ambassador in France to Philip II reporting an offer to make gold. "I have told the man that alchemy is vain and uncertain and that I have little confidence in it. Your Majesty will believe him a fool with his babble about his secret, but Your Majesty can shut him up and if at the end of four months he has not done what he talks about, he can be sent to row in a galley on the Barbary coast." [1]

Though Catherine shared fully the weakness of many of the Renascence Princes for astrology, she does not seem to have had any faith in alchemy. Probably she knew nothing whatever of this contract signed by her son. Her own simple way of raising money was to pawn the diamonds of the crown to Venice for a hundred thousand écus and the rubies to Florence for a hundred thousand more. She refused to accept an offer of five thousand horse and fifteen thousand foot from Alva, but she took a small contingent

[1] B. N. Dupuy, 86; copy of contract, Lett. pntd. Revue Retrospective, 1834.

from him, asked money from the Pope and the Duke of Florence and men from the Duke of Savoy.[1]

After the first few weeks the royal army heavily outnumbered the insurgents, but the Huguenots had in the Admiral a great unifying force. The Prince of Condé as a prince of the blood was the nominal chief and he did not always do in military matters what the Admiral advised. The thousands of Huguenot nobles big and little, who flocked to his standard had for the Admiral, in spite of the fact that they shared the faults of pride and an inordinate desire for honor which were common to all the French nobility, a sort of filial reverence. His influence was always strong enough to prevent the sort of bitter quarrels and jealousies which distracted the royal army, from doing too much harm in the Huguenot camp.[2]

The Huguenots gave the reasons for their rising in three documents. The first, sent to the King, accused the house of Guise of continually slandering them. "They are even now being accused of disloyalty because they dared to try to come before His Majesty to present their case with arms in their hands. . . . Your Majesty having been earnestly urged to keep the promise made by you a long time ago to the King of Spain to seize the leaders of the religion and to exterminate all those who profess it, they have no other means of safely trying to get a hearing from Your Majesty, except to come in arms." In addition, they wanted Metz, Calais and Havre de Grace put into their hands as pledges. To these extreme demands the King did not deign to reply.[3]

The second manifesto, sent five days after the rising, added other reasons for it. The Huguenots complained of bad administration of the kingdom and that it was crushed with taxation which rested heavily upon the common people and even oppressed the nobility, in spite of the fact that

[1] Bouillé, II, 388, A. N. K. 1508 f. 70, 74; Letts. I, 70, 77, B. N. It. 1726 f. 163.
[2] E. g. A. N. R., 30 Nov., 1567.
[3] La Popelinière, Bk. XII, 20, B. N. It. 1726 f. 145.

they had, from all time, been exempt from taxation. "This is brought about by the greed and avarice of certain strangers, more particularly Italians, because of the credit and influence which they enjoy in this kingdom." They asked that all foreign troops be dismissed, that the Huguenots should be allowed to come to court to state their case to His Majesty, that the Reformed worship should be entirely free with no distinction of place or person and finally that the Estates General should be assembled.[1]

A few days later they issued a third manifesto, in which they repudiated the idea that they intended any danger either to the person of the King or to the Church and based their rising solely upon the need of defending themselves against a plot to exterminate or drive out of the kingdom all those of the Reformed religion. They added a humble request that the King would consider the very heavy taxation of his people and, in order to do it the better, assemble the Estates General. In this as in all the other Huguenot wars, whatever other reasons might be alleged at the beginning of the revolt, negotiations for peace soon made it evident that, as the Venetian Ambassador reported, "the chief difficulty is reduced to the single head of religion." [2]

By the evident allusion to the Queen Mother and the Italian favorites who surrounded her, the Huguenots won what they had never had before—the decided hatred of Catherine and the unfortunate consequence of their second rising was that they had finally broken both with their young King and with his mother, the real ruler of the kingdom.

The backbone of the Huguenot armies was their cavalry, made up of the lesser nobles or country gentry. The higher nobility of France was not very numerous, though much more numerous than the English peerage, which was not simply a fighting caste but a political order of hereditary members of Parliament. During the reign of Charles IX,

[1] La Popelinière, Bk. XII, 21, 22.
[2] B. N. It. 1726 f. 159.

1560-1574, when the English House of Lords had about fifty lay members, the French peerage had ten Princes, ten Dukes, a hundred counts and about a hundred viscounts. But there were thousands of country gentry. For instance, the single bishopric of Auxerre had four hundred and fifty-eight country gentlemen, heads of families, who by the old feudal right owed military service to their Count. The small mountainous province of Auvergne counted fifteen hundred families of the country gentry. These lived on their estates and by their rents, aided by the produce of their domain lands, and seldom went far from home except for war, which was considered their chief, indeed their only, calling. Hence the proverb "Gentil homme sans guerre vaut autant que paysan sans terre." Outside of certain limited sections public opinion was strongly opposed to their engaging in business and besides most of them were too proud to do so. Many of them indeed managed their own domain lands, though when they went to war this had to be left to their wives.[1]

The first part of the sixteenth century was a time of prosperity for France. The population increased and there were evident signs of a great growth of agricultural production. Great extents of forest land were cleared for cultivation, many new grist mills were built and France became a large exporter of grain. The rental value of land rose steadily and continued to rise out of proportion to the fall in the value of money, which went on through the century because of the increase in the quantity of precious metals, for the South American mines alone sent to Europe in the single year 1545 almost as much gold as had been mined in the world in the fifty previous years. The nobles paid no taxes and this agricultural prosperity brought wealth to the country gentry, which they ought to have accumulated, for their lives were simple.[2]

Most of them lived in châteaux or manor houses, which

[1] De Stoutz, 72; Tommasco, I, 490; Brant. IV, 328; Rel. I, 2, p. 406.
[2] De la Tour, I, 215, 220, 285, 288; Avenel, 16, 364.

were a complex of buildings containing in one group everything necessary for the management of the domain and the life of the master. A writer on agriculture describes in 1565 a typical old-fashioned manor house. It was surrounded by a stout wall some ten feet high with a gate on the south side large enough to admit a loaded hay wagon. Against the left wall were built the lodgings for the farmer and his hands, and sheds for the farm implements surmounted by lofts for the crops. On the side of the court were the stables for the horses and cattle with their forage overhead. At the bottom of the court directly opposite the gate was the master's house, usually raised on a platform reached by steps. At the edge of the platform was built an elaborate fowl house, ducks and geese on the ground floor, chickens above, with separate compartments for the turkeys and pheasants, the peacocks being allowed to range the premises. The sties for the pigs and the pens for the sheep and goats were on the north wall of the great court. Behind the house were the gardens, the pot herbs on the right and the flower beds and vegetables on the left. Here were also the bee-hives. The grand allée, a double row of trees, led between the two gardens to the wall of the orchard and in the middle of the allée was the well. Through the orchard a door opened on the pasture meadow.[1]

The manor was not luxuriously furnished, and one of its chief rooms was always the kitchen, where the whole family, master and domestics, met more or less frequently. Many of the smaller gentry dined in the kitchen and in the cold winter evenings the gentleman and lady of the manor often sat in their high backed arm chairs under the hood of the great chimney. But the manor houses all had a salon on whose walls were fixed a couple of swords, a couple of pikes and halberds, two or three mail coats, some bows, arbalests, and hackbuts. The hawk sat on his perch, in the corridor, the nets for hunting were thrown down in the

[1] Charles Estienne, qtd. Vaissière (1), 63.

corner and under the great bench against the wall the hunting dogs lay on fresh straw.[1]

Secure in the distinction of his rank the country gentleman ordinarily lived as a good fellow among his neighbors of lower position and was usually on familiar terms with the freeholders and peasants. At fêtes or markets he drank at the village inn and danced with the peasant girls and his own domestics. Very few of the gentry took any interest in things of the mind and adventurous spirits could always escape by military service from any sense of monotony which might seem to them to haunt the ancestral courtyard filled with the placid life of the farm. When the Italian wars had ended just before the death of Henry II and during the intervals of the civil wars beginning with the reign of Charles IX, some of these more active spirits travelled abroad, so that twenty years later it was estimated that "three or four hundred young men, mostly of good houses, leave France every year for foreign lands to see and to learn." [2]

In spite of his placid existence, the country gentleman had his strong pride and sense of class honor which led to more or less violence and attempts to take the law into his own hands when the incessant law suits which vied with hunting as his chief amusements, did not turn out to his satisfaction. But up to the reign of Henry II duels were not common in France. From that time on the habit of duelling spread, so that about a generation later a fighting man of letters wrote "the slaughter of soldiers in duels in a single year is greater than that of a pitched battle" (1580-1585). And another said: "There is no family in this kingdom that has not had two or three duels in the past generation." Pride and the spirit of vengeance roused in the civil wars caused most of these, but among the courtiers, the bulk of whom were from the families of the country gentry, bloody duels arose on the most frivolous pretext; as

[1] Noel du Fail, Contes d' Eutrapel, II, 38, 40, qtd. Vaissière (1), 77.
[2] Maulde, I, 87; de la Tour, I, 377, de la Noue.

when two of these young gamecocks quarreled over the question whether the embroidery on a lady's dress represented a border of the letter X or the letter Y.[1]

This habit of duelling was only one phase of a marked change in the condition and conduct of the lesser nobility which began in the reign of Henry II. Their prosperity declined so that forty years later one of them could write, "it does not need many words to make everyone recognize how thoroughly the gentlemen of France have lost the prosperity and abundance in which they lived up to the accession of Henry II." Some observers charged this wholly upon the ruinous effects of the civil wars following the foreign wars of Henry II, but the gentry were well paid in the Italian wars and the civil wars, ruinous as they were, affected less than half of them. The decline of their prosperity seems therefore to have been most largely due to abandoning the old simple patriarchal life of the lord and lady, to change fustian for silk and to adopt more and more luxurious habits until finally even the pages and lackeys were clad in cloth of gold.[2]

For this more sumptuous life the country gentleman began to seek a more elegant setting. "It seemed to him that the cage was too small for so beautiful a bird." The new manner of domestic architecture suggested by the Italian craftsmen called to the courts of Louis XII and Francis I, was slowly taken up and adapted to its new setting by French skill. Many a country gentleman became discontented with the plain ancestral house and remodelled it in the newer and more stately fashion. Some of them began to build without sitting down to count the cost and the second and third generations of the sixteenth century saw many "follies" erected to impoverish once flourishing estates and make a splendid setting for a pinched existence in mansions whose owners, when they received their fathers' old friends, were obliged to regale them chiefly by discourses on

[1] De la Noue, Discours, 244; Duplessis Mornay, Arch. C., X, 93; Mouton, 85.

[2] De la Noue, 157, 159, 160.

architecture. There was a well-known monk, welcome in many manors and châteaux because of his charming social qualities, whose ready wit found a favorite subject in this situation. "He was wont to say, 'Oh what is the use of these beautiful towers, salons and cabinets where the cooking pots are so cold and the cellars so empty? By the worthy slipper of the Pope (his usual oath), I like better to lodge under a low roof and to hear from my room the music of turning spits and smell the fragrance of roasts and to see the sideboard well covered with goblets and bottles than to visit in these grand palaces, to take beautiful walks through stately halls, breaking a fast with a toothpick.' " [1]

In the days of Francis I and his son, the nobles feared the expense of court service and those who had court duties established the custom of serving by quarters, which left them for nine months in the cheap abundance of the manor. The King's household had only one hundred and sixty officers. But from the reign of his son there was a steady increase in this roll of courtiers up to its apogee under Louis XVI when the household of the King was four thousand and of each prince of the royal family two thousand. As the gentry began to feel the attraction of court life, many of them tired of an isolation where they were "free as the Doge of Venice" and gave mortgages to enable them to carry their "mills, forests and meadows on their backs." They became avid for court appointments as the court became larger and larger, until, as one of them said, his fellows were "chasing offices like swallows after flies." [2]

The Calvinist preachers, outside of very limited areas, never had very much success among the peasants. They first found a hearing in the towns, beginning among the humbler artisans and gradually spreading their doctrines in many places among the higher burghers' families whose members were apt to be chosen to civic offices. Their influence then extended rapidly among the gentry, especially

[1] De la Noue, Discours, 166.
[2] Tommasco, I, 488; Montaigne, I, 42; du Bellay, Vielleville.

south of the Loire and in the populous and wealthy province of Normandy. Even with so brief a description of the character and life of that class of the population, it requires but little imagination to see how quickly formidable armies could be raised among the lords of the manor and their sons and servitors, embittered by long persecution and sometimes maddened by the loss of a friend or relative in the frequent mob massacres of the orthodox peasants or superstitious city proletariats, which so often preceded the outbreaks of the intermittent civil war. As the rallying word spread from manor to manor, the horses were saddled, the arms taken down from the wall, purses filled from the strong box under the master's bed and, in little groups of relatives or neighbors, the elements of what was probably the best cavalry then in the world, filled with a reckless native courage and leavened with veterans of the old wars, flowed rapidly from all directions toward the mustering place. In this way a single gentleman of the south travelling from château to château raised over five hundred cavaliers during his journey, and on one occasion, at the call of Coligny and his brothers, three thousand horsemen mustered in six days.[1]

At the beginning of the civil wars the nobles of France were by no means an individualistic body. They formed sections whose numbers were more or less closely bound to each other. The provincial feeling was strong and each of the nobles of Burgundy, for instance, was conscious of a certain solidarity which distinguished the whole body from the nobles of Picardy. The influence of the old feudal ties, even though service could no longer be exacted, made the nominal vassals of great houses still apt to sustain their quarrels and follow their lead. When the Prince of Condé married the daughter of the Duc de Thouars the nobility allied by blood or vassalage to the important family of Tremoille came over to his side. The old Seigneur de la Vergne rode into the battle of Jarnac in the midst of twenty-five descendants and nephews and fell in the heap of fifteen

[1] De Ruble ctd. (1), I, 194; Marcks, 154.

of them killed together. But the civil wars broke up some of these geographical, legal or family groups. No province was solidly orthodox and royalist, though in some the number of Huguenots was inconsiderable and even in the provinces which were the Huguenot strongholds, the Catholic nobility rose in arms and made provincial civil war. The ties of vassalage, friendship and blood, though they held in many cases, proved not strong enough to resist the divisive influence of difference of opinion about religion. Many of the families of the country gentry split like the great noble houses of Bourbon and Montmorency. Even the sons did not always follow their fathers and in the slaughterous cavalry charges which were the turning points of most of the battles, the swords of friends and of brothers must often have been crossed.[1]

The great majority of the French gentry remained orthodox and of the orthodox gentry many, in the successive wars, rallied to the royal standard. But the appeal to support their cause in arms was apparently not as quickly effective in their case as in that of their heretic neighbors, for the Huguenots started the first three wars with more cavalry than the King. Nor is it to be supposed that all the gentry were extremely zealous, eager to take part in the fighting, or even very much interested in public affairs. When the German was at the gates of Paris in 1914, fishermen still sat quietly on the quais, absorbed in watching their tiny floats on the current of the Seine. Gilles de Gouberville, a country gentleman of Normandy, has left a very detailed journal from 1553 to April, 1562, covering therefore the outbreak of the first Huguenot war, and, during that critical period, it records a hundred times as many observations on good or bad weather as on the prospects of peace or war and displays far more interest in the killing of his pigs or the felling of his trees than in the massacres

[1] Letts. Missive Henri IV, Vol. II, p. 11, 128; d'Aubigné, III, 51; Romier, Rev. Hist. 1917, pp. 1, 255; Letts. I, 325, de la Noue. Brant. V, 350; d'Aubigné, III, 39, 154, IV, 324, V, 295, VII, 84, etc. Lambert, II, 42, A. N. K. 1497 B. N. fds. fr. 3951 f. 42.

of Huguenots or the plundering of churches, which we know was going on all around him. A considerable proportion of the gentry of France were like him and kept out of the whole business so far as they could. In time of stress a large number, perhaps the majority, of any nation, are drawn from their habitual routine of living and thinking, if at all, only by the inescapable pressure of circumstances set in train by more ardent, more adventurous, more interested or more conscientious personalities.

The second element of the Huguenot forces came from the burghers of the towns. The Huguenot armies did not usually make their base in any city. They were apt to keep the field and fight an open campaign. As one of the old captains put it, he liked better "to hear the lark sing than the mouse squeak." But their leaders saw from the first the enormous importance of the towns in any war waged in France. Since the general use of artillery, fortresses were not, it is true, of the overwhelming military importance they had been in feudal times. But cannon were still very hard to transport and neither very plentiful nor very efficient. There was, of course, a sort of refuge for a defeated and scattered army in old châteaux and deserted manors. Thirty years after the outbreak of the first Huguenot war there were in the single province of Poitou more than two hundred châteaux belonging to Huguenots "capable of standing cannon" and so delaying somewhat a victorious force and giving time for a broken army to rally. But the Huguenot leaders needed something stronger and larger to fall back on. There were in France about four hundred chartered towns, the greater part of them more or less strongly fortified, and in addition there were a number of fortified villages. In some towns the Huguenots were the stronger and these declared for the party whenever war began. In addition the outbreak of every war was signalled by simultaneous attempts to seize a number of others, either with or without the aid of Huguenots within the walls. An English Ambassador pointed out that a civil war

in England would be much shorter than in France because of the absence of a large number of defensible walled towns in England.[1] Most of the walled towns possessed arms, particularly firearms and at least a few cannon, and from among their inhabitants there could readily be raised bands of harquebusiers which formed the infantry of the Huguenot armies. They also furnished such field pieces or siege guns as the Huguenot forces had and the artillerymen to handle them. The Huguenot churches, organized by presbyteries and synods, came to undertake the formation of much of this city infantry and many congregations had captains in their employ. In the later wars the synods voted men and money for the Huguenot armies much as modern states might do and from time to time these synods elected leaders of the Huguenot nobility "Protectors of the Churches." In addition a local church or group of churches often had a noble as "protector."

The Huguenot war chest was never any too full, but it was saved from emptiness by the contributions of nobles, some of whom made great financial sacrifices for the cause, by money collected by the Reformed churches, by presents sent from sympathizers abroad, by melting down the gold or silver vessels of captured churches, by impositions levied in captured cities and so called "taxes" collected from the peasants. Their war expenses were decreased by the fact that their cavalry were expected to furnish their own fighting equipment, while their armies lived to a considerable extent on the country where they campaigned. In addition the sympathy of many of the German princes and nobles whose business was the raising of mercenary troops for service in foreign armies, made them more ready than they would have been in other cases to serve the Huguenot leaders on credit. In the later wars the party found a large resource in a tax of ten per cent levied on the gains of privateers sailing from La Rochelle to prey on French

[1] B. N. Nouvs. Acqs. 20600 f. 175, e.g. Quantin. ptnd. 36, 39, Cal. F. 1571, p. 437.

commerce or the ships of Spaniards, whom they treated as enemies. In accordance with a practice which continued to be a recognized method of warfare down to the nineteenth century, these privateers were granted letters of marque which authorized them to attack enemy commerce on their own charges and for private gain.

CHAPTER XXII

CATHERINE MAKES PEACE. THE POLITIQUES. CATHERINE RENEWS THE CIVIL WAR

The Huguenots, after the entire failure of their plan to seize the King and surprise many cities, shifted quickly and adopted very bold strategy. They started to starve out Paris. Within three days of their rising they were raiding the suburbs and burning all the windmills on one side of the city. They then seized bridges on all the rivers by which provisions were brought by boat and blockaded the roads. With this grip upon the capital they waited till their forces could come up from Poitou, Guienne, Dauphiny, Auvergne, Languedoc and other provinces of the south, which was the true Huguenot country. They sacked every church and clergyman's house for leagues around. The linens and velvets and silks of the church treasuries they took for their own use and made of them trousers, vests and handkerchiefs, but for all the precious metals and jewels of the altar furnishings and ornaments they were obliged to give a strict accounting and to turn them into a common fund for the expenses of the army. They ill-treated a number of the priests, chiefly by way of brutal mockery. And they sometimes put to the torture church officers whom they suspected of concealing precious vessels or jewels.[1]

They did not have a large enough force to beleaguer Paris and the army of the Constable kept steadily increasing until, early in November, he had twenty thousand well-armed men. Condé's headquarters were at the city of St. Denis close to the gate of Paris in a carefully intrenched camp where he could rally about four thousand infantry and two thousand cavalry. On the 10th of November the

[1] La Popelinière, XII, 19; Haton, I, 144.

Constable marched out of the Porte St. Denis to form line of battle in the plain between the two cities. Condé had just sent off d'Andelot with five hundred horse and a good body of harquebusiers to block the supposed advance of the Spanish auxiliaries. The Admiral was in favor of skirmishing and retiring, but the Prince wanted to fight. The fiery charge of the Huguenot gentlemen, led by the Admiral, on the right wing, was entirely successful. They broke through, attacked the six thousand Parisian militia held in reserve and drove them in headlong panic back to Paris. Meanwhile Condé, charging the center, forced their ranks to give way. The Constable was in his seventy-fifth year, but, bleeding from four or five wounds, he stood to it in the melée till his horse was knocked down. He struggled to his feet and an old enemy, Robert Stuart, formerly of the Scotch guard, called on him to surrender. For answer the indomitable old man drove the hilt of a broken sword into his foe's mouth, knocking out two of his teeth, and the same instant fell mortally wounded by a pistol ball. But the Catholic line was so much longer than the Huguenot that their unbroken squadrons still outnumbered them. They rallied and fell upon Condé, driving him back in his turn. The Admiral had been riding a hard-mouthed horse which bolted with him and carried him so far that his men were left without a leader. In consequence, the night fell with the Catholic army in great confusion, but practically masters of the field, and the Huguenots slowly retreating toward the city of St. Denis.[1]

The mortal wound of the Constable was a great blow to the Catholics, who at midnight retired within Paris, and the next morning the Huguenots reoccupied their battle line. D'Andelot, who had hurried back too late to join in the fighting, made an unopposed raid, burning and laying waste up to the very walls of the city. Both sides claimed the victory, but it is evident that but for the fall of night the Huguenots might have been completely overwhelmed.

[1] Castelnau, Bk. VI, Ch. 7, Cal. F. 1568, p. 370, d'Aumale, Whitehead.

Nevertheless the victors were not too much elated, for the Huguenot gentry, heavily outnumbered, had again demonstrated their dangerous fighting power and Condé had maintained a favorable position. Three days after the battle, while the commanders of the royal army were still quarreling over who should succeed to the position of the Constable, the Huguenots started on a march eastward, which enabled them to form a junction with considerable reinforcements from the south (10,000 men). Then, swinging toward the north, they met on the banks of the Moselle ten thousand German mercenaries, provided with a few field pieces and commanded by the young son of the Elector Palatine. This was a large corps of mercenaries, equal to the combined German and Swiss contingents under Anjou's command.

For in the midst of the jealous and quarreling nobles of the army Catherine saw nothing better to do than to make the King's younger brother, Henry, Duke of Anjou, then sixteen, Lieutenant-General of the King. But this appointment did not stop the quarrels and five great nobles demanded the leading of the vanguard and the position of lieutenant for the young Prince. Catherine had already summoned the Duke of Nevers with royal troops from Piedmont and she urged him again and again to hasten his arrival. She ordered that her son's command of the army should be exercised by the advice of the Duke of Montpensier, the Duke of Nemours and Marshal Cossé, to whom she added the Duke of Nevers when he arrived. This council was to exercise very strict control. It was probably the best arrangement possible, but it worked very badly. The jealousies seemed to grow worse from day to day. Catherine did her best by letters to put some energy into the camp and visited it in the hope of appeasing quarrels. But this very visit provoked discontent. The Duke of Nemours protested angrily, and Catherine was obliged to write to him that she had no intention of interfering in the campaign, "for war can only be waged by one on the spot." In one case the quarrel even went so far as the lie, a blow and a

drawn dagger, with Anjou and his suite holding the men to prevent bloodshed and the Swiss guards afterwards threatening to fight the Breton regiments to avenge the dishonor to their colonel.[1]

In addition to this discord the poverty of the Crown was so extreme and its credit so low that the King, who had announced a loan from the city of Paris at 8⅓%, was obliged to bid the notaries stop all investments of money in mortgages until the loan was taken up.[2]

The military situation was a very serious one. The Huguenot army, after their junction with their German auxiliaries, had recrossed the Moselle and made a skilful retreat to their old center, Orleans, a position in touch with the provinces where their chief strength lay. Condé, who had threatened the court five months before with less than two thousand men, now had thirty thousand under his command and the royal army did not feel strong enough to take the field against him.

Catherine was evidently anxious not to have matters pushed to an issue upon the field of battle. She had been intensely angered as well as frightened by the second Huguenot attack upon the court, wrote of it with the greatest indignation, and returned to her old habit of alluding to the heretics as "that vermin." But before the year was over she had suppressed her anger and was actively engaged in negotiations for peace. The Huguenots demanded that all noblemen should have the right of worship in their houses and that anyone might come to it who wished. They wanted the edict regarding religion made perpetual and irrevocable instead of a mere royal proclamation and they asked that Huguenot judges and municipal officials who had been removed should be replaced in their offices. Catherine sent the first of these articles to her son with the request that the princes and leading officers of the camp should

[1] B. N. It. 1726 f. 169, A. N. K. 30 Nov., 1567, B. N. Béthune, 8730; Letts. III, 103, B. N. It. 1726 f. 187, 196, A. N. K. 1509 f. 10; Letts. III, 99; Cal. F. 1568, p. 407.

[2] B. N. It. 1726 f. 215, 220; Cal. F. 1568, p. 433.

express their opinion upon it. They voted unanimously that it ought to be granted, and, although the King was unwilling to grant the other Huguenot demands, negotiations continued with hope of a successful issue. This roused the anger of the Spanish Ambassador, who had a most stormy interview with Catherine in which he accused her of being the only person who wanted a thing so pernicious not only to this kingdom but to all Christendom as peace with heretics. He told her that she "really wanted what she said she didn't want." "He got angry," she reports, "and I got furious." [1]

Before the end of March the peace was made. But the Edict of Longjumeau, which recorded the terms, was more the beginning of suspicion than the end of hatred and the peace which followed it was worse than war. The royal officers found it impossible, at first, to enforce the Edict at all. The German mercenaries of both sides, as they retired, plundered right and left, the peasants in revenge killed stragglers and in turn the reiters burnt villages. The Huguenot regiments from the south, before they left Touraine, destroyed churches and killed priests. In Orleans, when the Catholics according to the Edict prepared to say mass, the Huguenots stopped them and overturned the altars. At Rouen and Amiens where the Catholics were the stronger they hung some Huguenots and killed others in the streets. Amid the continual flood of reports of disorders, it seemed to one observer at court that "wherever one side found itself strong it would not grant the privileges of the peace to the other side." Six weeks after the proclamation of the Edict, news reached the court that the Catholics of Vienne had killed many Huguenots and nearly every day reports came from some place of importance that the law had been broken by one side or the other. In Paris Huguenots were killed by the mob, dismembered and dragged about the city by boys. The Venetian Ambassador reports: "I saw this twice before my house. I was stupe-

[1] B. N. It. 1726 f. 178; Letts. III, 60, 62, 75, 81, 89.

fied to see boys not more than three palms high standing around a bloody corpse, beating it with sticks and stamping on the face; finally it was thrown into the river." The Duke of Montpensier reported that the city of La Rochelle, the great Huguenot stronghold, had refused to allow the royal commander to bring any troops past their gates and that a score or more of priests had been publicly put to death. After long hesitation most of the Huguenot towns received royal garrisons, but La Rochelle continued to refuse, saying that for three hundred years they had never had a garrison and that the garrisoned cities like Lyons, Orleans, Bordeaux, Limoges, Angers, received every day ill treatment from the King's soldiers. They also refused to pay the sum of one hundred thousand livres which had been levied upon them, saying they were too much impoverished by the late war.[1]

It is small wonder therefore that more than two months after the publication of the Edict of Pacification, the King began a letter to one of his marshals as follows: "Inasmuch as up to the present time my Edict of Pacification has not been observed and kept according to my intentions, etc." Against the wrongs inflicted upon their followers the leading Huguenots like the Queen of Navarre, the Cardinal of Châtillon, the Admiral and the Prince of Condé made formal and bitter protest, emphasizing particularly the continual murders by which "more were being slain in peace than had fallen in war." So that "if the King would really do justice for these outrages, the trees would have more men hanging on them than leaves." [2]

As time went on these complaints grew more bitter and more like threats and just before the tension broke again in open war, a passionate summary of them was written to Catherine with a deep tone of menace from a new source. At the end of August, Elizabeth of England sent her Ambas-

[1] B. N. fds. fr. 6611 f. 59 A. N. K. 1509, Mar. 27; B. N. It. 1726 f. 223, 228, 238, 247, Nouvs. Acqs. 6001 f. 21 C. C. C. 24 f. 330, 355.

[2] B. N. fds. fr. 3207 f. 59 C. C. C. 24 f. 146, 178, 329, 346; d'Aumale pntd. App. II, 281, 282; Cal. F. 1567, p. 516.

sador a long written message to be delivered to the King of France and his mother in the presence of the royal council about the

"violations of the royal Edict throughout France and that not by private persons, but also by governors of your provinces, castles and cities and frequently by your soldiers in garrison. . . . And what is more horrible before God, these murders are, as everybody knows, maintained, incited and rewarded by those who have great influence under Your Majesty. . . . Reports of horrible plunderings by fire and sword, drowning or strangling your subjects in monstrous, barbarous, brutal and horrible ways, men, women and children, noble and ignoble, rich and poor, are sent to the Queen of England every day by people worthy of belief, merchants and others of her subjects doing business in France. . . . If the King will inquire through impartial persons, he will find that his realm is more weakened and wasted in six months since the edict of peace than in nine months of civil war before. . . . In conclusion, Sire, . . . if those who thus kill and plunder are avowed and maintained, as if it was done by an ordinance of the Church of Rome in order to exterminate those who do not agree to the doctrines of Rome, the Queen of England sees clearly, although perhaps very late, the danger which threatens her and her state, and also she does not doubt that other princes and potentates agreeing with her against the unity of the Bishop of Rome, will see plainly how necessary it is for them to provide promptly against such a danger. The Queen of England now feels herself discharged before God and her honor and toward you, her good brother and ally for any steps she may take for her own safety." [1]

To this protest Catherine replied firmly, "The King will not admit any judge or mediator between himself and his subjects . . . and he begs the Queen and all other princes not to thrust themselves into this affair." But while Catherine strongly resented Elizabeth's remonstrance about the sufferings of the Huguenots, she sent conciliatory answers to the complaints of her own subjects and frequently wrote to the royal officers to enforce the Edict of Pacification. Outrages, however, did not stop and the Huguenots began

[1] E. g., Condé to King, Aug., 1568, B. N. C. C. C. 24 f. 178; pntd. in French, Letts. III, 179, Cal. F. 1568, summary.

to suspect that worse things had been planned against them. It is not surprising therefore that by the middle of the spring the report was circulated that a privy councillor of the Queen Mother had on his death bed told his physician that the Queen "had made this peace for no other end than that those of the religion, being now exhausted by long expense and scattered to their houses, might with greater facility be dispatched." [1]

Three things very much increased the suspicion and fears of the Huguenots. The first was the fact that since the beginning of the civil war, a whole network of orthodox leagues, similar to that formed earlier by Monluc in the south, had been spread over France. These were sometimes provincial and sometimes municipal. By the middle of the summer they existed in Burgundy, Berry, Champagne, Brie, Maine, Anjou, Touraine, Limousin, Agenois and at Châlon-sur-Saône, Beauvais, Toulouse, Anduze and Perigord. Their members were sworn to maintain "the law and faith of which we make profession in our baptism and to render all friendship and fraternity one to the other, to aid each other reciprocally against all attempts of the opposite party without regard to friends, or any relationship which we may have with those who undertake the contrary." The existence of these associations without any government authority suggested of itself the chances of a renewal of the war, and the Huguenots could hardly have been ignorant of the fact that by the middle of the summer the King had undertaken an enumeration of "all the good and faithful Catholics of the various provinces so that he can know what forces he can rely on if occasion presents itself, because the will of His Majesty is to live and die in the same religion as his predecessors and he wants to know the number of those who will follow his will and die in that religion." [2]

The second thing which increased the Huguenot suspi-

[1] Letts. III, 142, 145, 147, 149, 153, 157, 182; Cal. F. 1568, 470, 501.
[2] Thompson, 351, 353. B. N. Port. Font. 316 f. 41; B. N. It. 1726 f. 259, A. N. K. 1509; Lestrade pntd., 19.

cions was what they saw going on in the Netherlands. The Duke of Alva was terrorizing the population with his army and preparing for those sittings of the "Council of Blood" of which he wrote in the middle of the spring to his master, "the execution of those already arrested and those I am going to arrest will amount to more than eight hundred heads." [1]

The third thing which increased the suspicions of the Huguenots was the situation at court. Their bitterest enemy, the Cardinal of Lorraine, had larger power in the state than he had exercised since the time of Francis II, and he was particularly close to the King's brother, the young Duke of Anjou, now Lieutenant-General. As soon as this was known the Huguenots began to protest against it in the strongest possible way. Condé answered publicly a messenger of the King inviting him to court, "the reason why the King's subjects cannot live in peace and liberty of conscience as he wants them to do, is the friendship between the Duke of Anjou and the Cardinal of Lorraine and you can assure the King that I will not enter his court so long as the Cardinal of Lorraine remains there." To a message from the Cardinal himself to make friends with him Condé replied that he would never even be reconciled to him unless he would leave the court and under no circumstances would he ever admit him to the circle of his friends. The strong dislike of the Cardinal's influence was not confined to the Huguenots, the four marshals resented it exceedingly because, through the Duke of Anjou, who was Lieutenant-General of the King, it took all military power out of their hands, and all those moderate Catholics, counsellors and secretaries whom Catherine had gathered around her, were opposed to the Cardinal of Lorraine's policy and disliked his personality.[2]

The truth was that the able Cardinal had a genius for

[1] Gachard, II, 23.

[2] Eng. Ven. Ferr. Ambs. Arch. Mod., May 8; B. N. It. 1726, Cal. F. 1568, pp. 455, 470, 472, 474; A. N. K. 1509 f. 60.

exciting dislike, and like many proud, passionate men was exceedingly sensitive to the dislike his pride provoked. When the Cardinal of Bourbon, one of his two surviving associates of the group which surrounded the Triumvirate in the first civil war, advised him to retire from court because he was so much hated, he complained bitterly to an assembly of the heads of his family held in the room of the Duke of Nemours, who had married his brother's widow. He said he had never given anybody reason to hate him so much and begged the Duke of Nemours to stand by him. His sister-in-law broke in, saying that to speak freely, he himself was entirely to blame for all this, because when he might have made friends without any difficulty he had, on the contrary, irritated everybody against him by turning the cold shoulder to everybody and caring for nothing but his own advantage: that she herself had often begged him to do things for them and for others which he was unwilling to do: that she and her husband were willing enough to stand by him but that he must do differently from what he had done, because his past conduct had infuriated everybody against him.[1]

The result of this renewal of opposition and animosity to the Cardinal of Lorraine was the beginning of the formation of a third party in France, the Party of the Politiques. They were orthodox, but their fundamental principle as later expressed by their leader, Montmorency, was that "one year of civil war does more harm to the Catholic religion in France than ten years of peace with the heretics." The English Ambassador thus describes the beginning of the party:

"There be two kinds of the people whom the Papists term Huguenots; that is to say, Huguenots of religion and Huguenots of state. The one of these, perceiving that the Cardinal works to ruin them and their own peculiar force being not sufficient to withstand his malice, having shown appearance that they will

[1] Saulnier, 28, Arch. Mod., 9 May, 1568. Duchess of Nemours was sister of Duke to whom dispatch was sent.

join with the other, who seeing themselves excluded from all government, and those of Guise to be first to usurp the whole authority, presently practise a firm faction and league between themselves, either part promising to support the other." [1]

The head of the forming Party of Politiques was the Marshal Montmorency. This eldest son of the old Constable had never approved his father's joining with the Guise in the Triumvirate against his nephews, the Châtillons; and indeed the Constable had been driven into that unnatural alliance only by zeal for his religion and only for a short time. One recorded utterance of his was distinctly prophetic of the Politique attitude his sons were now taking. In 1565 when the Nuncio demanded that his red hat and his benefices should be taken from Cardinal Châtillon, the Constable said, "I am a Catholic, but if the Pope and his ministers go about again to trouble the realm, my sword shall be Huguenot." [2]

Marshal Montmorency now revived in a different form an ancient project of the Huguenot Party to unite the houses of Valois and Tudor. In 1563 Condé had proposed to Queen Elizabeth to marry the King, in spite of the fact that he was thirteen and the Queen thirty. Montmorency now secretly proposed to the English Ambassador that, in order to break up the influence of the Cardinal of Lorraine with the young Duke of Anjou, it would be well for the Queen of England "not to take in ill part an overture of a treaty of marriage proposed between her and the Duke." The Ambassador commented, "though the Queen never meant that the same should take place, yet he thinks there would thereof arise great commodity, because Montmorency could thereby in such sort creep into credit with Anjou, as, in the end, to work the Cardinal of Lorraine out of favor." [3]

Nothing came of this suggestion at the time, and, just at this juncture, the house of Guise won its long lawsuit with

[1] Cal. F. 470, Arch. Vat. ctd. L'Epinois, 30.
[2] Cal. F. 1565, p. 524.
[3] Cal. F. 1563, p. 263, 1568, p. 487.

the house of Montmorency over the County of Dammartin which had been running for eight years. The old quarrel between the two houses, which dated back to the time of Francis I, reached, therefore, the greatest pitch of intensity and the Venetian Ambassador, even in the face of the Huguenot peril, could write that "it is now become a great danger to the King and the kingdom." [1]

Between these three factions, the extreme orthodox headed by the Cardinal of Lorraine and the heir apparent, who demanded the extermination of heresy at any cost; the Huguenots threatening to renew the civil war; and the new party of the Politiques driven by their quarrel with the house of Guise towards alliance with the Huguenots, Catherine found herself in great danger of losing all voice in the government. The Modenese Ambassador, a shrewd observer, thought she was trying to work "by her usual method of standing well with both parties in order to keep her power." The English Ambassador described her policy in detail as follows:

"The end of the war brings no end to this mortal hatred between the houses of Guise and Montmorency. The Queen Mother, perceiving these factions and not assured of either, hopes by her uncertain dealings to nourish their enmity to her gain without profit to either and so proceeds, giving countenance sometimes to the Guisians and otherwhiles to the Montmorency. And although the principal affairs of the realm be dealt with in the body of the council, yet is not that propounded which is meant, nor that executed which there is determined, but, every man's opinion heard, she makes her profit thereof and resolves what she thinks best to serve her turn." [2]

That this policy of balancing between parties was Catherine's favorite and usual policy has been asserted by so many different observers who knew her well that it cannot be doubted, but this time the two ambassadors were mistaken. Catherine had determined not to pursue her usual

[1] B. N. It. 1726 f. 243.
[2] Arch. Mod., 15 June, 1568; Cal. F. 474.

middle policy of balancing between parties, but to act strongly after the model of Alva in the Netherlands; to seize the leaders of the Huguenots and to railroad them to the scaffold. This plan, of course, had been urged upon her by the leaders of the extreme Catholics at the interview of Bayonne and by Spain ever since. She had previously turned a deaf ear to these plans, but two things had made her change her mind. The first was the attempt to seize the King at Meaux. The Admiral had warned his friends when they insisted on making peace that Catherine would never forget this and the event showed he was right. Catherine regarded it as an unforgivable piece of treachery—not involving her life—but certainly the complete destruction of her influence in government and, as she had written in 1561 when it was proposed to destroy her power by the Estates General, she preferred "that if they were going to take her honor they should also take her life." [1]

In the second place she strongly suspected that the Huguenots were planning to renew the war. Early in May the Duke of Montpensier wrote from central France that he had sent to different places to find out what was going on and that the most common report was of a new movement on the part of the Huguenots with a rendezvous either at Paris or at Orleans. Large numbers of ex-Huguenot soldiers were said to have arrived in the suburbs of Paris and the Queen and her children were heavily guarded by special detachments of harquebusiers. The story was started and believed in Catholic circles that a former lieutenant of the Admiral, being at the point of death, sent for a confessor and told him that, at the last assembly of the Huguenot chiefs in Orleans before they surrendered, they had sworn to murder the Queen and all her children. It was even said that at the suggestion of the father confessor the dying man had sent for two notaries, dictated a confession and signed it. At the end of June one of her trusted agents wrote to Catherine from Orleans, "Diligence and vigilance

[1] Letts. I, 174.

were never so much needed as now. . . . Our enemies do not sleep. The signs of their activity appear every day. God grant that I may turn out to be more of a liar than a prophet. If you show my letters outside the royal council I shall be called a fool or a coward, but I should be unworthy of my charge if I didn't tell you what I think." A little later it was reported from England that Condé had written to say that "the peace was not being kept, though he did not blame the King but his bad counsellors. He would take arms very soon with twelve thousand men." In August the Duke of Montpensier wrote repeatedly to Catherine and the King if "the warnings which came to me regularly from several different places are true, we are very close to war." About the same time the Lieutenant-General of Languedoc wrote to his Governor, "the Huguenots are assembled in arms in the mountains and those of Dauphiny and Provence are on the march for La Rochelle." [1]

These fears were much increased by the suspicion that the Huguenots had an understanding with the Dutch insurgents. When Alva about two weeks before the Huguenot rising at Meaux had arrested Egmont and Horn, the richest and the ablest of all the Dutch nobles had escaped his hand. Just before Alva arrived, William, Prince of Orange, had crossed the border into Germany after vainly urging Egmont and Horn to go with him. In the spring of 1568, by pledging all his great estates, he gathered a force of German mercenaries and Dutch refugees and threw them suddenly in three places across the border. With these invasions a body of Huguenots coming from the South was to coöperate and the Seigneur de Cocqueville actually appeared on the border with some thousand disbanded Huguenot soldiers. Condé repudiated this action and said it was done without authority from him, but he was not believed. The project of an alliance between Condé, Coligny and the

[1] B. N. Nouvs. Acqs. 6001 f. 21, 23, 33, ib. 599, f. 170; St. Petersburg 24 It. 1726 f. 226, 234 fds. fr. 3179 f. 25. Arch Mod., May 6, Neg. Tosc., III, 574.

Prince of Orange "having before their eyes loyalty to their princes led into tyranny by bad counsel, to help each other as far as they could for the glory of God, the public good and the liberty of religion," [1] which was drawn up by someone in August, 1568, was never signed, but there was the greatest sympathy between the two insurrections. Huguenot soldiers fought in the ranks of Orange and later he and his brother joined the Huguenot army.

Urged therefore by resentment for the attack at Meaux and fear of its renewal, Catherine, whose earlier impression that the real cause of these wars was "ambition and desire for revenge rather than religion" never changed, determined to retaliate on the Huguenot leaders in kind by seizing them as they had tried to seize her—to nip their scheme in the bud. Whether she had formed this plan before making peace we cannot say. Some people thought so. At all events, by the end of the spring of 1568 she definitely planned to treat Condé and the Admiral as Alva had treated the confederates in the Netherlands; a resolution urged on her by letters from Philip II.[2]

It was very difficult to conceal from the Huguenots for very long any resolution formed at court. They had spies among the under-secretaries and also many friends even at the royal council board. The news which came from them was very alarming, though it is questionable whether any of these informers got hold of the actual thread of the plot. In addition, they knew that guards had been put at all fords and bridges consisting of a captain and twelve men. They were to allow nobody to pass without knowing where he came from and where he was going. The King was gathering troops which were being disposed in such a way as to cut off the Huguenot leaders, Condé and the Admiral, who were in Burgundy, from their followers in the South. A spy was captured at Noyers, the small but well fortified

[1] Groen, III.

[2] "As she has often said to me." Rel. I, 4, p. 180; A. N. K. 1511, May 4, 1568.

town in which Condé had taken refuge, who confessed he had been sent to measure the height of the walls and to count the number in the garrison. They could not help but see the effect of Catherine's secret plan to appoint none but Catholics as governors of cities and to get the command of the captaincies of men at arms so far as possible in the hands of "marked" Catholics. They did not know that early in June Ruscellai had been sent to Rome by Catherine at the instance of the Cardinal of Lorraine to ask the Pope to give three hundred thousand scudi to make strong war against the Huguenots. Fifty years later the Memoirs of Tavannes, written by his son, said that "in the month of August, the Queen determined with the assistance of the Cardinal of Lorraine to carry out the objects for which she had made peace. She sent therefore to Tavannes the command to arrest the Prince (of Condé) in Noyers." The Queen, he goes on to explain, was counselled more by passion than by reason and he replied to her that "the undertaking was dangerous and proposed by excited and inexperienced men. . . . If it pleased His Majesty to declare open war, he would then prove that he knew how to serve him, but if he should be willing to carry out this command, Condé and the Admiral, having good horses, would save themselves and . . . the princes of this party would always remain his mortal enemies." The Memoirs continue: "Tavannes thought it best to give the alarm to the Prince of Condé, therefore he sent a messenger with a letter which contained this sentence: 'The stag is in the net, the hunt is ready.' Condé suddenly left in alarm, with all his family." [1]

The Memoirs of Tavannes were written so long after the events they described and contain so much of his son and so little of himself, that careful historians have used them with suspicion, but this story, told long afterwards, is confirmed in the most striking way by three contemporary

[1] D'Aumale, pntd. II, App. 280, 287. Serres, 19; Pasquier, Bk. VI, 3; Hug. Envoy to Council of Berne, Frankreich D 473; A. N. K. 1511, Sp. Amb. reports talk with Catherine, Arch. Mod. 13, 18 June. Tavannes, 35.

documents which the man who told it had never seen. These documents so far as I know have escaped the notice of historians. The Spanish Ambassador reports in two dispatches that Catherine told him so cautiously that she drew with her own hand the curtains of the gallery in which they were walking, that Tavannes had been ordered to capture or kill Condé and the Admiral and he had refused. The Legate, who had every chance to know the facts, writing a year later about these events, said, "The peace (of Longjumeau) was made to catch the heads of the cursed sect after they had laid down their arms, but the traitors who gave this counsel, or at least joined in it, let the foxes out of the trap and those in charge of carrying out the plan gave such timely warning to the rebels that they left Noyers and got safely to La Rochelle." [1]

Although the Huguenots did not know these facts, which prove to us the intentions of Catherine, they knew enough to be alarmed and on their guard. "The Prince of Condé was warned by some of the greatest nobles of France and members of the royal council that they were preparing to besiege Noyers with an army in order to take him or to kill him and the Admiral and others who were with him, while forces from two other directions were to cut off their retreat." [2] Early in the morning of the 23rd of August, 1568, the Prince and the Admiral, with their families, and friends, set out on a forced march through the midst of their enemies across France to reach the Huguenot stronghold of La Rochelle. Before starting Condé issued a declaration and justification of war. This and subsequent declarations gave the reasons why the Huguenots believed there was a plot on the part of the Catholics to seize their chiefs and suppress their religion in France and throughout all Europe. They also pointed out the violence and assassinations which they had suffered in many places and alleged that commissions

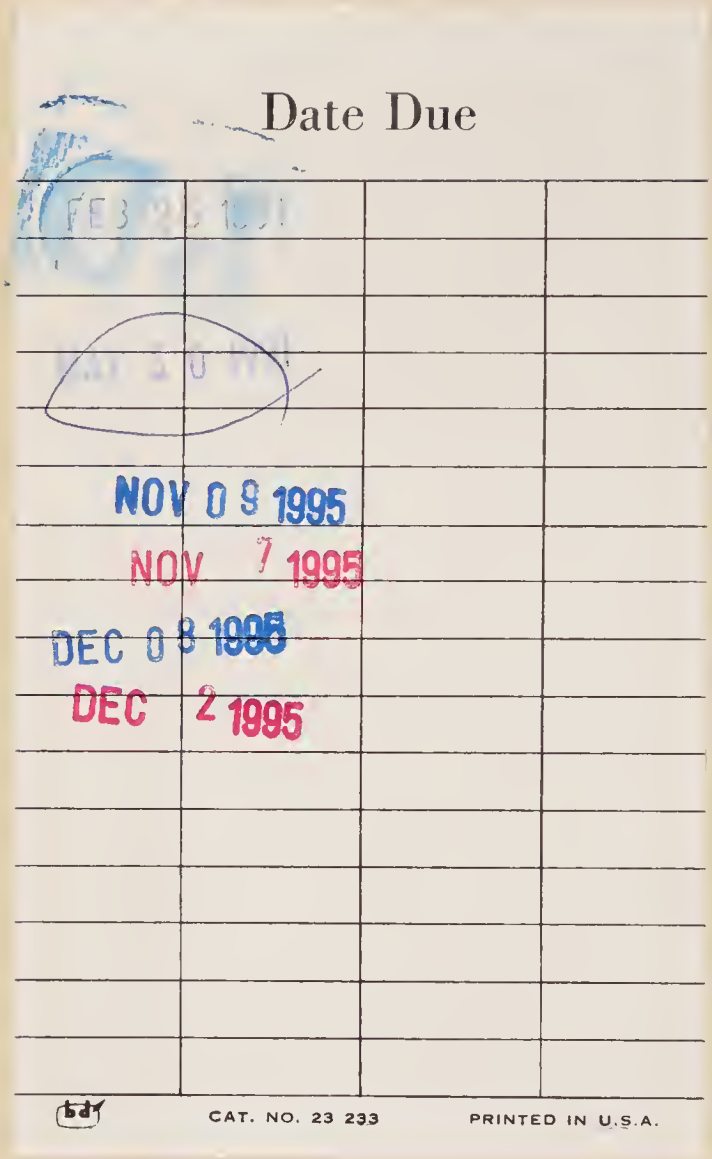
[1] A. N. K. 1511, 1509 f. 4; Arch. Vat. 5269 f. 63. Pntd. Thompson, 553. Ranke says is by Legate.

[2] Arch. Berne Frankreich, D. 473. Statement of Huguenot Envoy.

had been sent to all governors to seize the leading Huguenots in order that "the wolves might have an easier time with the sheep when the sheep dogs were taken away." As they had no such plain proof of the intended treachery of Catherine as we now possess, somebody in the party prepared a forged document which contained false proof of what they rightly suspected. It was in the form of a letter supposedly written by the agent of the Cardinal of Créquy at the court to his master. He wishes to explain how it is that the King is sending out letters to his officers to assure the chiefs of the Huguenot nobility that he intends to keep the Edict and to maintain their liberty of worship. This is only to "amuse and put them to sleep," and to catch all the leaders "in order that we may be able to exterminate this vermin without leaving a single person in the realm who is infected, because that will be a seed to renew the evil, unless we follow this way in which our neighbors (allusion to Alva in the Netherlands) are showing us such a good example." [1]

In reply to the Huguenot manifesto, the King accused them of having broken the Edict because some of the cities which were to be surrendered to the King had not been surrendered; like Sancerre, Montauban and the smaller places of Dauphiny and Languedoc. La Rochelle not only refused to receive her garrison, but was building fortifications and equipping vessels of war without the permission of the King. The Admiral and Condé were accused of making alliance with the Flemings and the Germans for the ruin of the Catholics and the establishment of their pretended Reformation.[2]

[1] Pntd. Histoire de Nostre Temps. See N.
[2] Summary of reasons, both sides, La Popelinière, Bk. XIV, 51.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